

LETTERS

FROM A

FARMER

IN

PENNSYLVANIA,

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF THE

BRITISH COLONIES.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

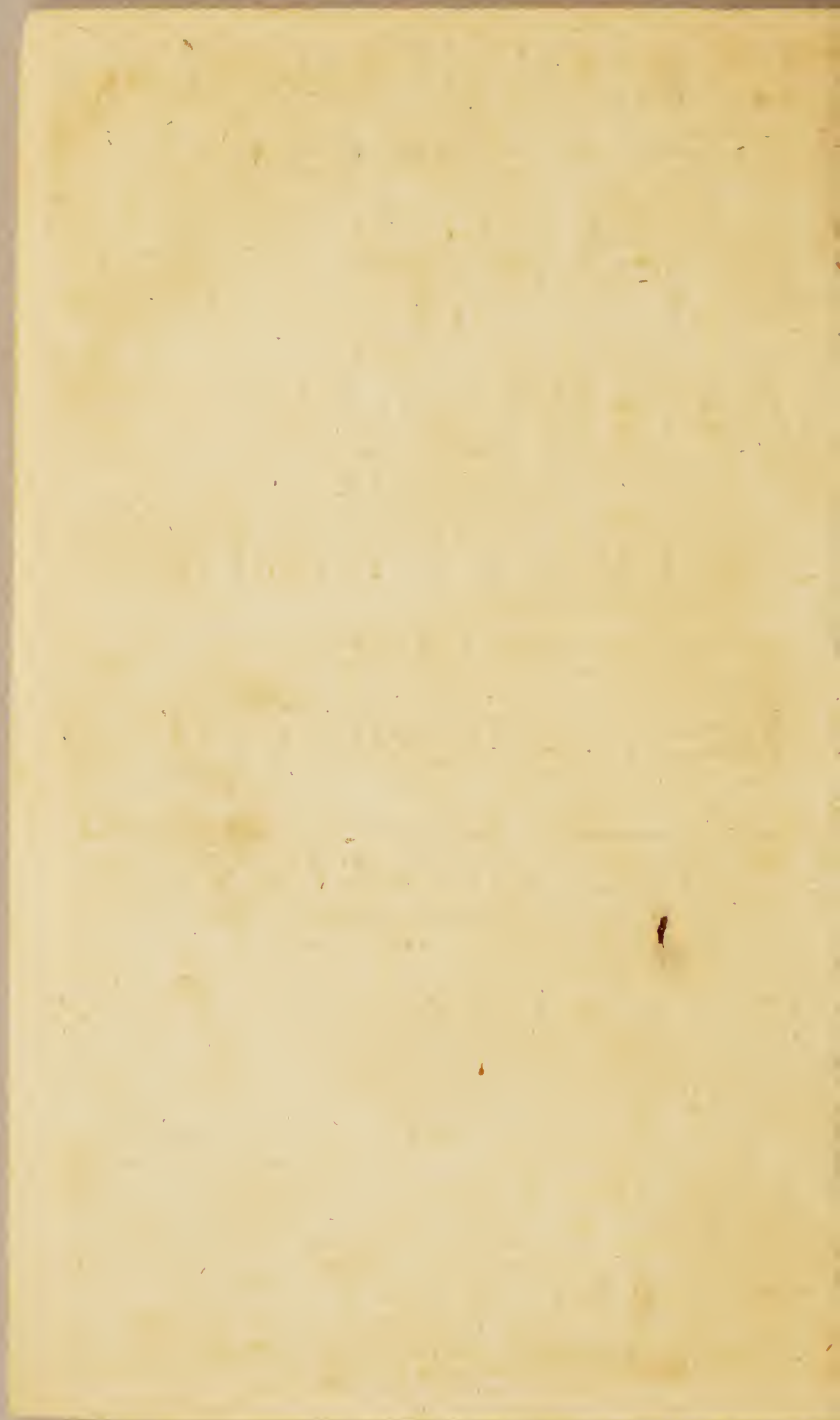
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# LETTERS

FROM A

FARMER, &c.

## LETTER I.

*My dear* COUNTRYMEN,

**I** AM a *Farmer*, settled, after a variety of fortunes, near the banks of the river *Delaware*, in the province of *Pennsylvania*. I received a liberal education, and have been engaged in the busy scenes of life; but am now convinced, that a man may be as happy without bustle, as with it. My farm is small; my servants are few, and good; I have a little money at interest; I wish for no more; my employment in my own affairs is easy; and with a contented grateful mind, undisturbed by worldly hopes or fears, relating to myself, I am completing the number of days allotted to me by divine goodness.

BEING generally master of my time, I spend a good deal of it in a library, which I think the most valuable part of my small estate; and being acquainted with two or three gentlemen of abilities and learning, who honor me with their friendship, I have acquired, I believe, a greater knowledge in history, and the laws and constitution of my country, than is generally attained by men of my class, many of them not being so fortunate as I have been in the opportunities of getting information.

FROM my infancy I was taught to love *humanity* and *liberty*. Enquiry and experience have since confirmed my reverence for the lessons then given me, by convincing me more fully of their truth and excellence. Benevolence towards mankind, excites wishes for their welfare, and such wishes endear the means of fulfilling them. *These* can be found in liberty only, and therefore her sacred cause ought to be espoused by every man, on every occasion, to the utmost of his power. As a charitable, but poor person does not withhold his *mite*, because he cannot relieve *all* the distressed of the



miserable, so should not any honest man suppress his sentiments concerning freedom, however small their influence is likely to be. Perhaps he “ may touch some wheel, \* ” that will have an effect greater than he could reasonably expect.

THESE being my sentiments, I am encouraged to offer to you, my countrymen, my thoughts on some late transactions, that appear to me to be of the utmost importance to you. Conscious of my own defects, I have waited some time, in expectation of seeing the subject treated by persons much better qualified for the task ; but being therein disappointed, and apprehensive that longer delays will be injurious, I venture at length to request the attention of the public, praying, that these lines may be *read* with the same zeal for the happiness of *British America*, with which they were *wrote*.

WITH a good deal of surprize I have observed, that little notice has been taken of an act of parliament, as injurious in its principle to the liberties of these colonies, as the *Stamp-Act* was : I mean the act for suspending the legislation of *New-York*.

THE assembly of that government complied with a former act of parliament, requiring certain provisions to be made for the troops in *America*, in every particular, I think, except the articles of salt, pepper and vinegar. In my opinion they acted imprudently, considering all circumstances, in not complying so far as would have given satisfaction, as several colonies did : But my dislike of their conduct in that instance, has not blinded me so much, that I cannot plainly perceive, that they have been punished in a manner pernicious to *American* freedom, and justly alarming to all the colonies.

IF the *British* parliament has a legal authority to issue an order, that we shall furnish a single article for the troops here, and to compel obedience to *that* order, they have the same right to issue an order for us to supply those troops with arms, cloaths, and every necessary ; and to compel obedience to *that* order also ; in short, to lay *any burthens* they please upon us. What is this but *taxing* us at a *certain sum*, and leaving to us only the *manner* of raising it ? How is this mode more tolerable than the *Stamp-Act* ? Would that act have appeared more pleasing to *Americans*, if being ordered thereby to raise the sum total of the taxes, the mighty privilege had been left to them, of saying how much should be paid for an instrument of writing on paper, and how much for another on parchment ?

AN act of parliament, commanding us to do a certain thing, if it has any validity, is a *tax* upon us for the expence that accrues in complying with it ; and for this reason, I believe, every colony on the continent, that chose to give a mark of their respect for *Great-Britain*, in complying with the act relating to the troops,

cautiously



cautiously avoided the mention of that act, lest their conduct should be attributed to its supposed obligation.

THE matter being thus stated, the assembly of *New-York* either had, or had not, a right to refuse submission to that act. If they had, and I imagine no *American* will say they had not, then the parliament had *no right* to compel them to execute it. If they had not *this right*, they had *no right* to punish them for not executing it; and therefore *no right* to suspend their legislation, which is a punishment. In fact, if the people of *New-York* cannot be legally taxed but by their own representatives, they cannot be legally deprived of the privilege of legislation, only for insisting on that exclusive privilege of taxation. If they may be legally deprived in such a case, of the privilege of legislation, why may they not, with equal reason, be deprived of every other privilege? Or why may not every colony be treated in the same manner, when any of them shall dare to deny their assent to any impositions, that shall be directed? Or what signifies the repeal of the *Stamp-Act*, if these colonies are to lose their *other* privileges, by not tamely surrendering *that* of taxation?

THERE is one consideration arising from this suspension, which is not generally attended to, but shews its importance very clearly. It was not *necessary* that this suspension should be caused by an act of parliament. The crown might have restrained the governor of *New-York*, even from calling the assembly together, by its prerogative in the royal governments. This step, I suppose, would have been taken, if the conduct of the assembly of *New-York* had been regarded as an act of disobedience *to the crown alone*; but it is regarded as an act of † “disobedience to the authority of the BRITISH LEGISLATURE.” This gives the suspension a consequence vastly more affecting. It is a parliamentary assertion of the *supreme authority* of the *British* legislature over these colonies, in *the point of taxation*, and is intended to COMPEL *New-York* into a submission to that authority. It seems therefore to me as much a violation of the liberties of the people of that province, and consequently of all these colonies, as if the parliament had sent a number of regiments to be quartered upon them till they should comply. For it is evident, that the suspension is meant as a *compulsion*; and the *method* of compelling is totally indifferent. It is indeed probable, that the sight of red coats, and the hearing of drums, would have been most alarming; because people are generally more influenced by their eyes and ears, than by their reason. But whoever seriously considers the matter, must perceive that a dreadful stroke is aimed at the liberty of these colonies. I say, of these colonies; for the cause of *one* is the cause of *all*. If the parliament may lawfully deprive *New-York* of any of *her* rights, it may deprive any, or all the other colonies of *their* rights; and nothing can

† See the act of suspension.



can possibly so much encourage such attempts, as a mutual inattention to the interests of each other. *To divide, and thus to destroy*, is the first political maxim in attacking those, who are powerful by their union. He certainly is not a wise man, who folds his arms, and reposes himself at home, viewing, with unconcern, the flames that have invaded his neighbour's house, without using any endeavours to extinguish them. When Mr. *Hampden's* ship money cause, for *Three Shillings and Four-pence*, was tried, all the people of *England*, with anxious expectation, interested themselves in the important decision; and when the slightest point, touching the freedom of *one* colony, is agitated, I earnestly wish, that *all the rest* may, with equal ardor, support their sister. Very much may be said on this subject; but I hope, more at present is unnecessary.

With concern I have observed, that *two* assemblies of this province have sat and adjourned, without taking any notice of this act. It may perhaps be asked, what would have been proper for them to do? I am by no means fond of inflammatory measures; I detest them. I should be sorry that any thing should be done, which might justly displease our sovereign, or our mother country: But a firm, modest exertion of a free spirit, should never be wanting on public occasions. It appears to me, that it would have been sufficient for the assembly, to have ordered our agents to represent to the King's ministers, their sense of the suspending act, and to pray for its repeal. Thus we should have borne our testimony against it; and might therefore reasonably expect that, on a like occasion, we might receive the same assistance from the other colonies.

*Concordia res parvæ crescunt.*  
Small things grow great by concord.

\* *Nov. 5.*

A F A R M E R.

\* The day of King WILLIAM the Third's landing.

L E T.



## L E T T E R II.

My dear COUNTRYMEN,

THERE is another late act of parliament, which appears to me to be unconstitutional, and as destructive to the liberty of these colonies, as that mentioned in my last letter; that is, the act for granting the duties on paper, glass, &c.

THE parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority to regulate the trade of *Great-Britain*, and all her colonies. Such an authority is essential to the relation between a mother country and her colonies; and necessary for the common good of all. He, who considers these provinces as states distinct from the *British Empire*, has very slender notions of *justice*, or of their *interests*. We are but parts of a *whole*; and therefore there must exist a power somewhere to preside, and preserve the connection in due order. This power is lodged in the parliament; and we are as much dependent on *Great-Britain*, as a perfectly free people can be on another.

I HAVE looked over every *statute* relating to these colonies, from their first settlement to this time; and I find every one of them founded on this principle, till the *Stamp-Act* administration \*. All  
before,

\* For the satisfaction of the reader, recitals from the former acts of parliament relating to these colonies are added. By comparing these with the modern acts, he will perceive their great difference in *expression* and *intention*.

The 12th *Cba.* Chap. 18, which forms the foundation of the laws relating to our trade, by enacting that certain productions of the colonies should be carried to *England* only, and that no goods shall be imported from the plantations but in ships belonging to *England, Ireland, Wales, Berwick, or the Plantations, &c.* begins thus: "For the increase of shipping, and encouragement of the navigation of this nation, wherein, under the good providence and protection of GOD, the wealth, safety, and strength of this kingdom is so much concerned," &c.

The 15th *Cba.* II. Chap. 7, enforcing the same regulation, assigns these reasons for it. "In regard his Majesty's plantations, beyond the seas, are inhabited and peopled by his subjects of this his kingdom of *England*; for the maintaining a greater correspondence and kindness between them, and keeping them in a firmer dependence upon it, and rendering them yet more beneficial and advantageous unto it, in the further employment and increase of English shipping and seamen, vent of English woollen, and other manufactures and commodities, rendering the navigation to and from the same more safe and cheap, and making this kingdom a staple, not only of the commodities of those plantations, but also of the commodities of other countries and places for the supplying of them; and it being the usage of other nations to keep their plantations trade to themselves," &c.

The 25th *Cba.* II. Chap. 7, made expressly "for the better securing the plantation trade," which imposes duties on certain commodities exported from one colony to another, mentions this cause for imposing them: "Whereas by one act, passed in the 12th year of your Majesty's reign, intituled, An act for encouragement of shipping and navigation, and by several other laws, passed since that



*before*, are calculated to regulate trade, and preserve or promote a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire; and though many of them imposed duties on trade, yet those duties were always imposed *with design* to restrain the commerce of one part, that was injurious to another, and thus to promote

that time, it is permitted to ship, &c. sugars, tobacco, &c. of the growth, &c. of any of your Majesty's plantations in *America*, &c. from the places of their growth, &c. to any other of your Majesty's plantations in those parts, &c. and that *without paying custom for the same*, either at the lading or unlading the said commodities, by means whereof the trade and navigation in those commodities, from one plantation to another, is greatly increased, and the inhabitants of divers of those colonies, *not contenting themselves with being supplied with those commodities for their own use, free from all customs* (while the subjects of this your kingdom of *England* have paid great customs and impositions for what of them hath been spent here) *but, contrary to the express letter of the aforesaid laws, have brought into divers parts of Europe great quantities thereof, and do also vend great quantities thereof to the shipping of other nations, who bring them into divers parts of Europe, to the great hurt and diminution of your Majesty's customs, and of the trade and navigation of this your kingdom; FOR THE PREVENTION THEREOF, &c.*

The 7th and 8th *Will. III.* Chap. 22, intituled, "An act for preventing frauds, and regulating abuses in the plantation trade," recites that, "notwithstanding divers acts, &c. great abuses are daily committed *to the prejudice of the English navigation, and the loss of a great part of the plantation trade* to this kingdom, by the *artifice and cunning* of ill disposed persons; FOR REMEDY WHEREOF, &c. And whereas in some of his Majesty's *American* plantations, a doubt or misconstruction has arisen upon the before mentioned act, made in the 25th year of the reign of King *Charles II.* whereby certain duties are laid upon the commodities therein enumerated (which by law may be transported from one plantation to another, for the supply of each others wants) *as if* the same were, by the payment of those duties in one plantation, discharged from giving the securities intended by the aforesaid acts, made in the 12th, 22d and 23d years of the reign of King *Charles the II.* and consequently be at liberty to go to any foreign market in *Europe*," &c.

The 6th *Anne*, Chap. 37, reciting the advancement of trade, and encouragement of ships of war, &c. grants to the captors the property of all prizes carried into *America*, subject to such customs and duties, as if the same had been first imported into any part of *Great-Britain*, and from thence exported, &c.

This was a gift to persons acting under commissions from the crown, and therefore it was reasonable that the terms prescribed in that gift, should be complied with---more especially as the payment of such duties was intended to give a preference to the productions of *British* colonies, over those of other colonies. However being found inconvenient to the colonies, about four years afterwards, this act was, *for that reason*, so far repealed, that by another act "all prize goods, imported into any part of *Great-Britain*, from any of the plantations, were made liable to such duties only in *Great-Britain*, as in case they had been of the growth and produce of the plantations."

The 6th *Geo. II.* Chap. 13, which imposes duties on foreign rum, sugar and melasses, imported into the colonies, shews the reasons thus---"Whereas the welfare and prosperity of your Majesty's sugar colonies in *America*, are of the greatest consequence and importance to the *trade, navigation and strength* of this kingdom; and whereas the planters of the said sugar colonies, have of late years fallen into such great discouragements, that they are unable to improve or carry on the sugar trade, upon an equal footing with the foreign sugar colonies, without some advantage and relief be given to them from *Great-Britain*: FOR RE-



promote the general welfare. The raising a revenue thereby was never intended. Thus the King, by his judges in his courts of justice, imposes fines, which all together amount to a very considerable sum, and contribute to the support of government : But this is merely a consequence arising from restrictions, that only meant to keep peace, and prevent confusion ; and surely a man would argue very loosely, who should conclude from hence, that the King has a right to levy money in general upon his subjects. Never did the *British* parliament, till the period above mentioned, think of imposing duties in *America*, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE. Mr. *Greenville* first introduced this language, in the preamble to the 4th of *Geo. III.* Chap. 15, which has these words---“ And whereas it is just and necessary that A REVENUE BE RAISED IN YOUR MAJESTY’S SAID DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, for defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the same : We your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, THE COMMONS OF GREAT-BRITAIN, in parliament assembled, being desirous to make some provision in this present session of parliament, TOWARDS RAISING THE SAID REVENUE IN AMERICA, have resolved to GIVE and GRANT unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned,” &c.

A FEW months after came the *Stamp-Act*, which reciting this, proceeds in the same strange mode of expression, thus----“ And whereas it is just and necessary, that provision be made FOR RAISING A FURTHER REVENUE WITHIN YOUR MAJESTY’S DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, towards defraying the said expences, we your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the COMMONS OF GREAT-BRITAIN, &c. GIVE and GRANT,” &c. as before.

THE last act, granting duties upon paper, &c. carefully pursues these modern precedents. The preamble is, “ Whereas it is expedient THAT A REVENUE SHOULD BE RAISED IN YOUR MAJESTY’S DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government in such provinces, where it shall be found necessary ; and towards the further defraying the expences of defending, protecting and securing the said dominions, we your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the COMMONS OF GREAT-BRITAIN, &c. GIVE and GRANT,” &c. as before.

HERE we may observe an authority expressly claimed and exerted to impose duties on these colonies ; not for the regulation of trade ;

B

not

MEDY WHEREOF, AND FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF YOUR MAJESTY’S SUBJECTS,” &c.

The 29th *Geo. II.* Chap. 26, and the 1st *Geo. III.* Chap. 9, which continue the 6th *Geo. II.* Chap. 13, declare, that the said act hath, by experience, been found useful and beneficial, &c. These are all the most considerable statutes relating to the commerce of the colonies ; and it is thought to be utterly unnecessary to add any observations to these extracts, to prove that they were all intended solely as regulations of trade.



not for the preservation or promotion of a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire, heretofore the *sole objects* of parliamentary institutions; *but for the single purpose of levying money upon us.*

THIS I call an \* innovation; and a most dangerous innovation. It may perhaps be objected, that *Great-Britain* has a right to lay what duties she pleases upon her † exports, and it makes no difference to us, whether they are paid here or there.

To this I answer. These colonies require many things for their use, which the laws of *Great-Britain* prohibit them from getting any where but from her. Such are paper and glass.

THAT we may legally be bound to pay any *general* duties on these commodities relative to the regulation of trade, is granted; but we being *obliged by her laws* to take them from *Great-Britain*, any *special* duties imposed on their exportation *to us only*, with intention to raise a revenue from us only, are as much taxes upon us, as those imposed by the *Stamp-Act*.

WHAT is the difference in *substance* and *right*, whether the same sum is raised upon us by the rates mentioned in the *Stamp-Act*, on the use of paper, or by these duties, on the *importation* of it. It is only the edition of a former book, shifting a sentence from the end to the beginning.

SUPPOSE the duties were made payable in *Great-Britain*?

IT signifies nothing to us, whether they are to be paid here or there. Had the *Stamp-Act* directed, that all the paper should be landed at *Florida*, and the duties paid there, before it was brought to the *British* colonies, would the act have raised less money upon us, or have been less destructive of our rights? By no means: For as we were under a necessity of using the paper, we should have been under the necessity of paying the duties. Thus, in the present case, a like *necessity* will subject us, if this act continues in force, to the payment of the duties now imposed.

WHY was the *Stamp-Act* then so pernicious to freedom? It did not enact, that every man in the colonies *should* buy a certain quantity

\* "It is worthy observation how quietly subsidies, granted in forms *usual* and *accustomed* (though heavy) are borne; such a power hath use and custom. On the other side, what discontentments and disturbances subsidies *framed in a new mould* do raise (SUCH AN INBRED HATRED NOVELTY DOT HATCH) is evident by examples of former times." Lord Coke's 2d Institute, p. 33.

† Some people think that *Great-Britain* has the same right to impose duties on the exports to these colonies, as on the exports to *Spain* and *Portugal*, &c. Such persons attend so much to the idea of exportation, that they entirely drop *that of the connection between the mother country and her colonies*. If *Great-Britain* had always claimed, and exercised an authority to compel *Spain* and *Portugal* to import manufactures from her only, the cases would be parallel: But as she never pretended to such a right, they are at liberty get them where they please; and if they chuse to take them from her, rather than from other nations, they voluntarily consent to pay the duties imposed on them.



quantity of paper---No: It only directed, that no instrument of writing should be valid in law, if not made on stamped paper, &c.

THE makers of that act knew full well, that the confusions that would arise from the disuse of writings, would COMPEL the colonies to use the stamped paper, and therefore to pay the taxes imposed. For this reason the *Stamp-Act* was said to be a law THAT WOULD EXECUTE ITSELF. For the very same reason, the last act of parliament, if it is granted to have any force here, WILL EXECUTE ITSELF, and will be attended with the very same consequences to *American* liberty.

SOME persons perhaps may say, that this act lays us under no necessity to pay the duties imposed, because we may ourselves manufacture the articles on which they are laid; whereas by the *Stamp-Act* no instrument of writing could be good, unless made on *British* paper, and that too stamped.

SUCH an objection amounts to no more than this, that the injury resulting to these colonies, from the total disuse of *British* paper and glass, will not be *so afflicting* as that which would have resulted from the total disuse of writing among them; for by that means even the *Stamp-Act* might have been eluded. Why then was it universally detested by them as slavery itself? Because it presented to these devoted provinces nothing but a \* choice of calamities, imbibed by indignities, each of which it was unworthy of freemen to bear. But is no injury a violation of right but the *greatest* injury? If the eluding the payment of the taxes imposed by the *Stamp-Act*, would have subjected us to a more dreadful inconvenience, than the eluding the payment of those imposed by the late act; does it therefore follow, that the last is *no violation* of our rights, tho' it is calculated for the same purpose the other was, that is, *to raise money upon us, WITHOUT OUR CONSENT?*

THIS would be making *right* to consist, not in an exemption from *injury*, but from a certain *degree of injury*.

BUT the objectors may further say, that we shall suffer no injury at all by the disuse of *British* paper and glass. We might not, if we could make as much as we want. But can any man, acquainted with *America*, believe this possible? I am told there are but two or three *Glass-Houses* on this continent, and but very few *Paper-Mills*; and suppose more should be erected, a long course of years must elapse, before they can be brought to perfection. This continent is a country of planters, farmers, and fishermen; not of manufacturers. The difficulty of establishing particular manufactures in such a country, is almost insuperable. For one manufacture is connected with others in such a manner, that it may be said to be impossible to establish one or two, without establishing several

\* Either the *disuse* of writing, or the payment of *taxes* imposed by others *without our consent*.



ral others. The experience of many nations may convince us of this truth.

INEXPRESSIBLE therefore must be our distresses in evading the late acts, by the disuse of *British* paper and glass. Nor will this be the extent of our misfortune, if we admit the legality of that act.

GREAT-BRITAIN has prohibited the manufacturing *iron* and *steel* in these colonies, without any objection being made to her right of doing it. The like right she must have to prohibit any other manufacture among us. Thus she is possessed of an undisputed *precedent* on that point. This authority, she will say, is founded on the *original intention* of settling these colonies; that is, that she should manufacture for them, and that they should supply her with materials. The *equity* of this policy, she will also say, has been universally acknowledged by the colonies, who never have made the least objection to statutes for that purpose; and will further appear by the *mutual benefits* flowing from this usage ever since the settlement of these colonies.

Our great advocate, Mr. *Pitt*, in his speeches on the debate concerning the repeal of the *Stamp-Act*, acknowledged, that *Great-Britain* could restrain our manufactures. His words are these----  
 “ This kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has ALWAYS bound the colonies by her regulations and RESTRICTIONS in trade, in navigation, in MANUFACTURES----in every thing, *except that of taking their money out of their pockets, WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.*” Again he says, “ We may bind their trade, CONFINE THEIR MANUFACTURES, and exercise every power whatever, *except that of taking their money out of their pockets, WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.*”

HERE then, my dear countrymen, ROUSE yourselves, and behold the ruin hanging over your heads. If you ONCE admit, that *Great-Britain* may lay duties upon her exportations to us, *for the purpose of levying money on us only*, she then will have nothing to do, but to lay those duties on the articles which she prohibits us to manufacture---and the tragedy of *American* liberty is finished. We have been prohibited from procuring manufactures, in all cases, any where but from *Great-Britain* (excepting linens, which we are permitted to import directly from *Ireland*.) We have been prohibited, in some cases, from manufacturing for ourselves; and may be prohibited in others. We are therefore exactly in the situation of a city besieged, which is surrounded by the works of the besiegers in every part *but one*. If *that* is closed up, no step can be taken, *but to surrender at discretion*. If *Great-Britain* can order us to come to her for necessaries we want, and can order us to pay what taxes she pleases before we take them away, or when we land them here, we are as abject slaves as *France* and *Poland* can shew in wooden shoes, and with uncombed hair\*.

PER-

\* The peasants of *France* wear wooden shoes; and the vassals of *Poland* are remarkable for matted hair, which never can be combed.



PERHAPS the nature of the *necessities* of dependent states, caused by the policy of a governing one, for her own benefit, may be elucidated by a fact mentioned in history. When the *Carthaginians* were possessed of the island of *Sardinia*, they made a decree, that the *Sardinians* should not raise corn, nor get it any other way than from the *Carthaginians*. Then, by imposing any duties they would upon it, they drained from the miserable *Sardinians* any sums they pleased; and whenever that oppressed people made the least movement to assert their liberty, their tyrants starved them to death or submission. This may be called the most perfect kind of political necessity.

FROM what has been said, I think this uncontrovertible conclusion may be deduced, that when a ruling state obliges a dependent state to take certain commodities from her alone, it is implied in the nature of that obligation; is essentially requisite to give it the least degree of justice; and is inseparably united with it, in order to preserve any share of freedom to the dependent state; *that those commodities should never be loaded with duties, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF LEVYING MONEY ON THE DEPENDENT STATE.*

UPON the whole, the single question is, whether the parliament can legally impose duties to be paid *by the people of these colonies only, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE, on commodities which she obliges us to take from her alone*, or, in other words, whether the parliament can legally take money out of our pockets, without our consent. If they can, our boasted liberty is but

*Vox et præterea nihil.*

A sound and nothing else.

A F A R M E R.

L E T.

## L E T T E R III.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

**I** REJOICE to find that my two former letters to you, have been generally received with so much favor by such of you, whose sentiments I have had an opportunity of knowing. Could you look into my heart, you would instantly perceive a zealous attachment to your interests, and a lively resentment of every insult and injury offered to you, to be the motives that have engaged me to address you.

I AM no further concerned in any thing affecting *America*, than any one of you; and when liberty leaves it, I can quit it much more conveniently than most of you: But while Divine Providence, that gave me existence in a land of freedom, permits my head to think, my lips to speak, and my hand to move, I shall so highly and gratefully value the blessing received, as to take care, that my silence and inactivity shall not give my implied assent to any act, degrading my brethren and myself from the birthright, wherewith heaven itself "*hath made us free* \*."

SORRY I am to learn, that there are some few persons, who shake their heads with solemn motion, and pretend to wonder, what can be the meaning of these letters. "*Great-Britain*," they say, "is too powerful to contend with; she is determined to oppress us; it is in vain to speak of right on one side, when there is power on the other; when we are strong enough to resist, we shall attempt it; but now we are not strong enough, and therefore we had better be quiet; it signifies nothing to convince us that our rights are invaded, when we cannot defend them; and if we should get into riots and tumults about the late act, it will only draw down heavier displeasure upon us."

WHAT can such men design? What do their grave observations amount to, but this----"that these colonies, totally regardless of their liberties, should commit them, with humble resignation, to *chance, time*, and the tender mercies of *ministers*."

ARE these men ignorant, that usurpations, which might have been successfully opposed at first, acquire strength by continuance, and thus become irresistible? Do they condemn the conduct of these colonies, concerning the *Stamp-Act*? Or have they forgot its successful issue? Ought the colonies at that time, instead of acting as they did, to have trusted for relief to the fortuitous events of futurity? If it is needless "to speak of rights" now, it was as needless then. If the behavior of the colonies was prudent and glorious then, and successful too; it will be equally prudent and glorious



glorious to act in the same manner now, if our rights are equally invaded, and may be as successful. Therefore it becomes necessary to enquire, whether “our rights *are* invaded.” To talk of “defending” them, as if they could be no otherwise “defended” than by arms, is as much out of the way, as if a man having a choice of several roads to reach his journey’s end, should prefer the worst, for no other reason, but because it *is* the worst.

As to “riots and tumults,” the gentlemen who are so apprehensive of them, are much mistaken, if they think, that grievances cannot be redressed without such assistance.

I WILL now tell the gentlemen, what is “the meaning of these letters.” The meaning of them is, to convince the people of these colonies, that they are at this moment exposed to the most imminent dangers; and to persuade them immediately, vigorously, and unanimously, to exert themselves, in the most firm, but most peaceable manner, for obtaining relief.

THE cause of *liberty* is a cause of too much dignity, to be sullied by turbulence and tumult. It ought to be maintained in a manner suitable to her nature. Those who engage in it, should breathe a sedate, yet fervent spirit, animating them to actions of prudence, justice, modesty, bravery, humanity and magnanimity.

To such a wonderful degree were the antient *Spartans*, as brave and free a people as ever existed, inspired by this happy temperature of soul, that rejecting even in their battles the use of trumpets, and other instruments for exciting heat and rage, they marched up to scenes of havock, and horror\*, with the sound of flutes, to the tunes of which their steps kept pace----“exhibiting,” as *Plutarch* says, “at once a terrible and delightful sight, and proceeding with a deliberate valor, full of hope and good assurance, as if some divinity had sensibly assisted them.”

I HOPE, my dear countrymen, that you will, in every colony, be upon your guard against those, who may at any time endeavor to stir you up, under pretences of patriotism, to any measures disrespectful to our Sovereign and our mother country. Hot, rash, disorderly proceedings, injure the reputation of a people, as to wisdom, valor and virtue, without procuring them the least benefit. I pray GOD, that he may be pleased to inspire you and your posterity, to the latest ages, with a spirit of which I have an idea, that I find a difficulty to express. To express it in the best manner I can, I mean a spirit, that shall so guide you, that it will be impossible to determine whether an *American’s* character is most distinguishable, for his loyalty to his Sovereign, his duty to his mother country, his love of freedom, or his affection for his native soil.

EVERY government at some time or other falls into wrong measures.

\* *Plutarch* in the life of *Lycurgus*. Archbishop *Petter’s* *Archæologia Græca*.



asures. These may proceed from mistake or passion. But every such measure does not dissolve the obligation between the governors and the governed. The mistake may be corrected; the passion may subside. It is the duty of the governed to endeavor to rectify the mistake, and to appease the passion. They have not at first any other right, than to represent their grievances, and to pray for redress, unless an emergence is so pressing, as not to allow time for receiving an answer to their applications, which rarely happens. If their applications are disregarded, then that kind of *opposition* becomes justifiable, which can be made without breaking the laws, or disturbing the public peace. This consists in the *prevention of the oppressors reaping advantage from their oppressions*, and not in their punishment. For experience may teach them, what reason did not; and harsh methods cannot be proper, till milder ones have failed.

IF at length it becomes UNDOUBTED, that an inveterate resolution is formed to annihilate the liberties of the governed, the *English* history affords frequent examples of resistance by force. What particular circumstances will in any future case justify such resistance, can never be ascertained, till they happen. Perhaps it may be allowable to say generally, that it never can be justifiable, until the people are FULLY CONVINCED, that any further submission will be destructive to their happiness.

WHEN the appeal is made to the sword, highly probable is it, that the punishment will exceed the offence; and the calamities attending on war out-weigh those preceding it. These considerations of justice and prudence, will always have great influence with good and wise men.

To these reflections on this subject, it remains to be added, and ought for ever to be remembered, that resistance, in the case of colonies against their mother country, is extremely different from the resistance of a people against their prince. A nation may change their king, or race of kings, and, retaining their antient form of government, be gainers by changing. Thus *Great-Britain*, under the illustrious house of *Brunswick*, a house that seems to flourish for the happiness of mankind, has found a felicity, unknown in the reigns of the *Stewarts*. But if once we are separated from our mother country, what new form of government shall we adopt, or where shall we find another *Britain*, to supply our loss? Torn from the body, to which we are united by religion, liberty, laws, affections, relation, language and commerce, we must bleed at every vein.

IN truth----the prosperity of these provinces is founded in their dependence on *Great-Britain*; and when she returns to her "old good humour, and her old good nature," as Lord *Clarendon* expresses it, I hope they will always think it their duty and interest,



as it most certainly will be, to promote her welfare by all the means in their power.

WE cannot act with too much caution in our disputes. Anger produces anger ; and differences, that might be accommodated by kind and respectful behavior, may, by imprudence, be enlarged to an incurable rage. In quarrels between countries, as well as in those between individuals, when they have risen to a certain height, the first cause of dissension is no longer remembered, the minds of the parties being wholly engaged in recollecting and resenting the mutual expressions of their dislike. When feuds have reached that fatal point, all considerations of reason and equity vanish ; and a blind fury governs, or rather confounds all things. A people no longer regards their interest, but the gratification of their wrath. The sway of the \* *Cleons* and *Clodius*'s, the designing and detestable flatterers of the *prevailing passion*, becomes confirmed. Wise and good men in vain oppose the storm, and may think themselves fortunate, if, in attempting to preserve their ungrateful fellow citizens, they do not ruin themselves. Their *prudence* will be called *baseness* ; their *moderation* will be called *guilt* ; and if their virtue does not lead them to destruction, as that of many other great and excellent persons has done, they may survive to receive from their expiring country the mournful glory of her acknowledgment, that their counsels, if regarded, would have saved her.

THE constitutional modes of obtaining relief, are those which I wish to see pursued on the present occasion ; that is, by petitions of our assemblies, or where they are not permitted to meet, of the people, to the powers that can afford us relief.

WE have an excellent prince, in whose good dispositions towards us we may confide. We have a generous, sensible and humane nation, to whom we may apply. They may be deceived. They may, by artful men, be provoked to anger against us. I cannot believe they will be cruel or unjust ; or that their anger will be implacable. Let us behave like dutiful children, who have received unmerited blows from a beloved parent. Let us complain to our parent ; but let our complaints speak at the same time the language of affliction and veneration.

IF, however, it shall happen, by an unfortunate course of affairs, that our applications to his Majesty and the parliament for redress, prove ineffectual, let us THEN take *another step*, by withholding from *Great-Britain* all the advantages she has been used to receive from us. THEN let us try, if our ingenuity, industry, and frugality, will not give weight to our remonstrances. Let us all be united with one spirit, in one cause. Let us invent---let us

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work

\* *Cleon* was a popular firebrand of *Athens*, and *Clodius* of *Rome* ; each of whom plunged his country into the deepest calamities.



work-----let us save-----let us, continually, keep up our claim, and incessantly repeat our complaints-----But, above all, let us implore the protection of that infinitely good and gracious being, † “ by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.”

*Nil desperandum.*

Nothing is to be despaired of.

A F A R M E R.

† PROV. viii. 15.

## L E T T E R IV.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

**A**N objection, I hear, has been made against my second letter, which I would willingly clear up before I proceed. “ There is,” say these objectors, “ a material difference between the *Stamp-Act* and the *late act* for laying a duty on paper, &c. that justifies the conduct of those who opposed the former, and yet are willing to submit to the latter. The duties imposed by the *Stamp-Act* were *internal* taxes; but the present are *external*, and therefore the parliament may have a right to impose them.”

To this I answer, with a total denial of the power of parliament to lay upon these colonies any “ *tax* ” whatever.

THIS point, being so important to this, and to succeeding generations, I wish to be clearly understood.

To the word “ *tax*,” I annex that meaning which the constitution and history of *England* require to be annexed to it; that is---that it is *an imposition on the subject, for the sole purpose of levying money.*

IN the early ages of our monarchy, certain services were rendered to the crown *for the general good.* These were personal \*: But in

\* It is very worthy of remark, how watchful our wise ancestors were, lest their *services* should be encreased beyond what the law allowed. No man was bound to go out of the realm to serve the King. Therefore, even in the conquering reign of *Henry the Fifth*, when the martial spirit of the nation was highly enflamed by the heroic courage of their Prince, and by his great success, they still carefully guarded against the establishment of illegal services. “ When this point (says Lord Chief Justice *Coke*) concerning maintenance of wars out of *England*, came in question, the commons did make their *continual* claim of their *antient* freedom and birthright, as in the first of *Henry the Fifth*, and in the seventh of *Henry the Fifth*, &c. the commons made a PROTEST, that they were not bound to the maintenance of war in *Scotland*, *Ireland*, *Calice*,  
France,



in process of time, such institutions being found inconvenient, *gifts* and *grants* of their own property were made by the people, under the several names of aids, tallages, tasks, taxes and subsidies, &c. These were made, as may be collected even from the names, *for public service* upon “need and necessity †.” All these sums were levied upon the people by virtue of their voluntary gift †. Their design was to support the *national honor and interest*. Some of those grants comprehended duties arising from trade; being imposts on merchandizes. These Lord Chief Justice Coke classes under “subsidies,” and “parliamentary aids.” They are also called “customs.” But whatever the *name* was, they were always considered as *gifts of the people to the crown, to be employed for public uses*.

COMMERCE was at a low ebb, and surprizing instances might be produced how little it was attended to for a succession of ages. The terms that have been mentioned, and, among the rest, that of “*tax*,” had obtained a national, parliamentary meaning, drawn from the principles of the constitution, long before any *Englishman* thought of *imposition of duties, for the regulation of trade*.

WHENEVER we speak of “taxes” among *Englishmen*, let us therefore speak of them with reference to the *principles* on which, and the *intentions* with which they have been established. This

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*France, Normandy, or other foreign parts, and caused their PROTESTS to be entered into the parliament rolls, where they yet remain; which, in effect, agreeth with that which, upon like occasion, was made in the parliament of 25th Edward I.” 2d Inst. p. 528.*

† 4th Inst. p. 28.

‡ *Reges Angliæ, nihil tale, nisi convocatis primis ordinibus, et assentiente populo suscipiunt.* Phil. Comines. 2d Inst.

These gifts entirely depending on the pleasure of the donors, were proportioned to the abilities of the several ranks of people who gave, and were regulated by *their* opinion of the public necessities. Thus Edward I. had in his 11th year a *thirtieth* from the *laity*, a *twentieth* from the *clergy*; in his 22d year a *tenth* from the *laity*, a *sixth* from *London*, and other corporate towns, *half of their benefices* from the *clergy*; in his 23d year an *eleventh* from the *barons* and others, a *tenth* from the *clergy*, a *seventh* from the *burgesses*, &c. *Hume’s Hist. of England.*

The same difference in the grants of the several ranks is observable in other reigns.

In the famous statute *de tallagio non concedendo*, the king enumerates the several *classes*, without whose consent, he and his heirs never should set or levy any tax---“*nullum tallagium, vel auxilium per nos, vel hæredes nostros in regno nostro ponatur seu levetur, sine voluntate et assensu archiepiscoporum, episcoporum, comitum, baronum, militum, burgensium, et aliorum liberorum com. de regno nostro.*” 34th Edward I.

Lord Chief Justice Coke, in his comment on these words, says---“for the quieting of the *commons*, and for a *perpetual and constant law for ever after*, both in this AND OTHER LIKE CASES, this act was made. These words are *plain*, WITHOUT ANY SCRUPLE, *absolute*, WITHOUT ANY SAVING.” 2d Cokes’s Inst. p. 532, 533. Little did the venerable judge imagine, that “*other LIKE cases*” would happen, in which the spirit of this law would be despised by *Englishmen*, the posterity of those who made it.



will give certainty to our expression, and safety to our conduct : But if, when we have in view the liberty of these colonies, we proceed in any other course, we pursue a *Juno* || indeed, but shall only catch a cloud.

IN the national, parliamentary sense insisted on, the word “ tax § ” was certainly understood by the congress at *New-York*, whose resolves may be said to form the *American* “ bill of rights.”

THE third, fourth, fifth, and sixth resolves, are thus expressed.

III. “ THAT it is *inseparably essential to the freedom of a people*, and the *undoubted right of Englishmen*, that \* NO TAX be imposed on them, *but with their own consent*, given personally, or by their representatives.”

IV. “ THAT the people of the colonies are not, and from their local circumstances, cannot be represented in the house of commons in *Great-Britain*.”

V. “ THAT the only representatives of the people of the colonies, are the persons chosen therein by themselves ; and that NO TAXES ever have been, or can be constitutionally imposed on them, but by their respective legislatures.”

VI. “ THAT ALL *supplies to the crown*, being free gifts of the people, it is *unreasonable, and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the British constitution*, for the people of *Great-Britain* to grant to his Majesty *the property of the colonies*.”

HERE is no distinction made between *internal* and *external* taxes. It is evident from the short reasoning thrown into these resolves, that every imposition “ to grant to his Majesty *the property of the colonies*,” was thought a “ tax ;” and that every such imposition, if laid any other way than “ with their consent, given personally, or by their representatives,” was not only “ unreasonable, and inconsistent with the principles and spirit of the *British* constitution,” but destructive “ to the freedom of a people.”

THIS language is clear and important. A “ TAX ” means an imposition to raise money. Such persons therefore as speak of *internal* and *external* “ TAXES,” I pray may pardon me, if I object to that expression, as applied to the privileges and interests of these colonies. There may be *internal* and *external* IMPOSITIONS, founded on *different principles*, and having *different tendencies* ; every “ tax ” being an imposition, tho’ every imposition is not a “ tax.” But *all taxes* are founded on the *same principle* ; and have the *same tendency*.  
EXTER-

|| The Goddess of *Empire*, in the Heathen Mythology ; according to an antient fable, *Ixion* pursued her, but she escaped in a cloud.

§ In this sense *Montesquieu* uses the word “ tax,” in his 13th book of *Spirit of Laws*.

\* The rough draught of the resolves of the congress at *New-York* are now in my hands, and from some notes on that draught, and other particular reasons, I am satisfied that the congress understood the word “ tax ” in the sense here contended for.



EXTERNAL impositions, for the regulation of our trade, do not "grant to his Majesty *the property of the colonies.*" They only prevent the colonies acquiring property, in things not necessary, in a manner judged to be injurious to the welfare of the whole empire. But the last statute respecting us, "grants to his Majesty *the property of the colonies,*" by laying duties on the manufactures of *Great-Britain* which they must take, and which she settled them, on purpose that they should take.

WHAT \* tax can be more *internal* than this? Here is money drawn, without their consent, from a society, who have constantly enjoyed

\* It seems to be evident, that Mr. Pitt, in his defence of *America*, during the debate concerning the repeal of the *Stamp-Act*, by "*internal taxes,*" meant any duties "for the purpose of raising a revenue;" and by "*external taxes,*" meant duties imposed "for the regulation of trade." His expressions are these----"If the gentleman does not understand the difference between *internal* and *external* taxes, I cannot help it; but there is a plain distinction between taxes levied FOR THE PURPOSES OF RAISING A REVENUE, and duties imposed FOR THE REGULATION OF TRADE, for the accommodation of the subject; although, in the consequences, some revenue might incidentally arise from the latter."

These words were in Mr. Pitt's reply to Mr. *Greenville*, who said he could not understand the difference between external and internal taxes.

In every other part of his speeches on that occasion, his words confirm this construction of his expressions. The following extracts will shew how positive and general were his assertions of our right.

"It is my opinion that this kingdom has NO RIGHT to lay A TAX upon the colonies."----"The *Americans* are the sons, not the BASTARDS of *England*. TAXATION is NO PART of the governing or legislative power."----"The taxes are a voluntary gift and grant of the commons ALONE. In LEGISLATION the THREE estates of the realm are ALIKE concerned, but the concurrence of the PEERS and the CROWN to a TAX, is only necessary to close with the FORM of a law. The GIFT and GRANT is of the COMMONS ALONE."----"The distinction between LEGISLATION and TAXATION is essentially necessary to liberty."----"The COMMONS of *America*, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this their constitutional right, of GIVING and GRANTING their OWN MONEY. They would have been SLAVES, if they had not enjoyed it." "The idea of a virtual representation of *America* in this house, is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of man.---It does not deserve a serious refutation."

He afterwards shews the unreasonableness of *Great-Britain* taxing *America*, thus----"When I had the honor of serving his Majesty, I availed myself of the means of information, which I derived from my office, I SPEAK THEREFORE FROM KNOWLEDGE. My materials were good. I was at pains to collect, to digest, to consider them; and I will be bold to affirm, that the profit to *Great-Britain* from the trade of the colonies, through all its branches, is two MILLIONS A YEAR. This is the fund that carried you triumphantly through the last war. The estates that were rented at two thousand pounds a year, threescore years ago, are three thousand pounds at present. Those estates sold then from fifteen to eighteen years purchase; the same may now be sold for thirty. YOU OWE THIS TO AMERICA. THIS IS THE PRICE THAT AMERICA PAYS YOU FOR HER PROTECTION."----"I dare not say how much higher these profits may be augmented."----"Upon the whole, I will beg leave to tell the house what is really my opinion; it is, that the *Stamp-Act* be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately. That the reason for the repeal be assigned, because it was founded on an ERRONEOUS PRINCIPLE."



enjoyed a constitutional mode of raising all money among themselves. The payment of this *tax* they have no possible method of avoiding ; as they cannot do without the commodities on which it is laid, and they cannot manufacture these commodities themselves. Besides, if this unhappy country should be so lucky as to elude this act, by getting parchment enough, in the place of paper, or by reviving the antient method of writing on wax and bark, and by inventing something to serve instead of glass, her ingenuity would stand her in little stead ; for then the parliament would have nothing to do but to prohibit such manufactures, or to lay a tax on *hats* and *woollen cloths*, which they have already prohibited the colonies *from supplying each other with* ; or on instruments, and tools of *steel* and *iron*, which they have prohibited the provincials *from manufacturing at all* † : And then, what little gold and silver they have, must be torn from their hands, or they will not be able, in a short time, to get an ax ‡, for cutting their firewood, nor a plough, for raising their food. In what respect, therefore, I beg leave to ask, is the late act preferable to the *Stamp-Act*, or more consistent with the liberties of the colonies ? For my own part, I regard them both with equal apprehension ; and think they ought to be in the same manner opposed.

*Habemus quidem senatus consultum,-----tanquam gladium in vagina repositum.*

We have a statute, laid up for future use, like a sword in the scabbard.

#### A F A R M E R.

† “ And that *pig and bar iron*, made in his Majesty's colonies in *America*, may be FURTHER MANUFACTURED IN THIS KINGDOM, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that from and after the twenty-fourth day of *June*, 1750, no mill, or other engine, for *slitting or rolling of iron*, or any *plating forge*, to work with a *tilt hammer*, or any *furnace for making steel*, shall be erected ; or, after such erection, continued IN ANY OF HIS MAJESTY'S COLONIES IN AMERICA.” 23d *George II.* Chap. 29, Sect. 9.

‡ Tho' these particulars are mentioned as being absolutely necessary, yet perhaps they are not more so than glass in our severe winters, to keep out the cold from our houses ; or than paper, without which such inexpressible confusions must ensue.

L E T -



## L E T T E R R V.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

P E R H A P S the objection to the late act, imposing duties upon paper, &c. might have been safely rested on the argument drawn from the universal conduct of parliaments and ministers, from the first existence of these colonies, to the administration of Mr. *Greenville*.

W H A T but the indisputable, the acknowledged exclusive right of the colonies to tax themselves, could be the reason, that in this long period of more than one hundred and fifty years, no statute was ever passed for the sole purpose of raising a revenue on the colonies? And how clear, how cogent must that reason be, to which every parliament, and every minister, for so long a time submitted, without a single attempt to innovate?

E N G L A N D, in part of that course of years, and *Great-Britain*, in other parts, was engaged in several fierce and expensive wars; troubled with some tumultuous and bold parliaments; governed by many daring and wicked ministers; yet none of them ever ventured to touch the *Palladium* of *American* liberty. Ambition, avarice, faction, tyranny, all revered it. Whenever it was necessary to raise money on the colonies, the requisitions of the crown were made, and dutifully complied with. The parliament, from time to time, regulated their trade, and that of the rest of the empire, to preserve their dependence, and the connection of the whole in good order.

T H E people of *Great-Britain*, in support of their privileges, boast much of their antiquity. It is true they are antient; yet it may well be questioned, if there is a single privilege of a *British* subject, supported by longer, more solemn, or more uninterrupted testimony, than the exclusive right of taxation in these colonies. The people of *Great-Britain* consider that kingdom as the sovereign of these colonies, and would now annex to that sovereignty a prerogative never heard of before. How would they bear this, was the case their own? What would they think of a *new* prerogative claimed by the crown? We may guess what their conduct would be, from the transports of passion into which they fell about the late embargo, tho' laid to relieve the most emergent necessities of state, admitting of no delay; and for which there were numerous precedents. Let our liberties be treated with the same tenderness, and it is all we desire.

E X P L I C I T as the conduct of parliaments, for so many ages, is, to prove that no money can be levied on these colonies by parliament, for the purpose of raising a revenue, yet it is not the only evidence in our favour.

EVERY



EVERY one of the most material arguments against the legality of the *Stamp-Act*, operates with equal force against the act now objected to; but as they are well known, it seems unnecessary to repeat them here.

THIS general one only shall be considered at present: That tho' these colonies are dependent on *Great-Britain*; and tho' she has a legal power to make laws for preserving that dependence; yet it is not necessary for this purpose, nor essential to the relation between a mother country and her colonies, as was eagerly contended by the advocates for the *Stamp-Act*, that she should raise money on them without their consent.

COLONIES were formerly planted by warlike nations, to keep their enemies in awe; to relieve their country, overburthened with inhabitants; or to discharge a number of discontented and troublesome citizens. But in more modern ages, the spirit of violence being in some measure, if the expression may be allowed, sheathed in commerce, colonies have been settled by the nations of *Europe* for the purposes of trade. These purposes were to be attained, by the colonies raising for their mother country those things which she did not produce herself; and by supplying themselves from her with things they wanted. These were the *national objects* in the commencement of our colonies, and have been uniformly so in their promotion.

To answer these grand purposes, perfect liberty was known to be necessary; all history proving, that trade and freedom are nearly related to each other. By a due regard to this wise and just plan, the infant colonies, exposed in the unknown climates and unexplored wildernesses of this new world, lived, grew, and flourished.

THE parent country, with undeviating prudence and virtue, attentive to the first principles of colonization, drew to herself the benefits she might reasonably expect, and preserved to her children the blessings, on which those benefits were founded. She made laws, obliging her colonies to carry to her all those products which she wanted for her own use; and all those raw materials which she chose herself to work up. Besides this restriction, she forbade them to procure *manufactures* from any other part of the globe, or even the *products* of *European* countries, which alone could rival her, without being first brought to her. In short, by a variety of laws, she regulated their trade in such a manner as she thought most conducive to their mutual advantage, and her own welfare. A power was reserved to the crown of *repealing* any laws that should be enacted: The *executive* authority of government was also lodged in the crown, and its representatives; and an *appeal* was secured to the crown from all judgments in the administration of justice.

FOR all these powers, established by the mother country over the colonies; for all these immense emoluments derived by her  
from



from them; for all their difficulties and distresses in fixing themselves, what was the recompence made them? A communication of her rights in general, and particularly of that great one, the foundation of all the rest---that their property, acquired with so much pain and hazard, should be disposed of by none but \* themselves---or, to use the beautiful and emphatic language of the sacred scriptures †, “that they should sit *every man* under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and NONE SHOULD MAKE THEM AFRAID.”

CAN any man of candor and knowledge deny, that these institutions form an affinity between *Great-Britain* and her colonies, that sufficiently secures their dependence upon her? Or that for her to levy taxes upon them, is to reverse the nature of things? Or that she can pursue such a measure, without reducing them to a state of vassalage?

IF any person cannot conceive the supremacy of *Great-Britain* to exist, without the power of laying taxes to levy money upon us, the history of the colonies, and of *Great-Britain*, since their settlement, will prove the contrary. He will there find the amazing advantages arising to her from them---the constant exercise of her supremacy---and their filial submission to it, without a single rebellion, or even the thought of one, from their first emigration to this moment---And all these things have happened, without one instance of *Great-Britain's* laying taxes to levy money upon them.

How many ‡ *British authors* have demonstrated, that the present wealth, power and glory of their country, are founded upon these

\* “The power of *taxing themselves*, was the privilege of which the *English* were, WITH REASON, particularly jealous.” *Hume's Hist. of England.*

† Mic. iv. 4.

‡ It has been said in the House of Commons, when complaints have been made of the decay of trade to any part of *Europe*, “That such things were not worth regard, as *Great-Britain* was possessed of colonies that could consume more of her manufactures than she was able to supply them with.”

“As the case now stands, we shall shew that the *plantations* are a spring of *wealth* to this nation, that they *work* for us, that their TREASURE CENTERS ALL HERE, and that the laws have tied them fast enough to us; so that it must be through our own fault and mismanagement, if they become independent of *England*.”

DAVENANT on the Plantation Trade.

“It is better that the islands should be supplied from the Northern Colonies than from *England*; for this reason, the provisions we might send to *Barbados*, *Jamaica*, &c. would be *unimproved* product of the earth, as grain of all kinds, or such product where there is little got by the improvement, as malt, salt beef and pork; indeed the exportation of salt fish thither would be more advantageous, but the goods which we send to the *Northern Colonies*, are such, whose *improvement* may be justly said, one with another, to be near *four fifths* of the value of the *whole commodity*, as apparel, household furniture, and many other things.”

*Idem.*

“*New-England* is the most prejudicial plantation to the kingdom of *England*; and yet, to do right to that most industrious *English* colony, I must confess, that though we lose by their unlimited trade with other foreign plantations, yet

we



these colonies? As constantly as streams tend to the ocean, have they been pouring the fruits of all their labors into their mother's lap. Good heaven! and shall a total oblivion of former tenderneſſes and bleſſings, be ſpread over the minds of a good and wiſe nation, by the ſordid arts of intriguing men, who, covering their ſelfiſh projects under pretences of public good, firſt enrage their countrymen into a frenzy of paſſion, and then advance their own influence and intereſt, by gratifying the paſſion, which they themſelves have baſely excited.

## HITHERTO

we are very great gainers by their direct trade to and from *Old England*. Our yearly exportations of *English* manufactures, malt and other goods, from hence thither, amounting, in my opinion, to *ten times* the value of what is imported from thence; which calculation I do not make at random, but upon *mature conſideration*, and, peradventure, upon *as much experience in this very trade*, as any other perſon will pretend to; and therefore, whenever reformation of our correſpondency in trade with that people ſhall be thought on, it will, in my poor judgment, require GREAT TENDERNESS, and VERY SERIOUS CIRCUMSPECTION."

Sir JOSIAH CHILD's *Discourſe on Trade*.

"Our plantations ſpend moſtly our *English* manufactures, and thoſe of all ſorts almoſt imaginable, in egregious quantities, and employ near *two thirds* of all our *English* ſhipping; ſo that we have *more people* in *England*, by reaſon of our plantations in *America*."

*Idem*.

Sir JOSIAH CHILD ſays, in another part of his work, "That not more than fifty families are maintained in *England* by the refining of ſugar." From whence, and from what *Davenant* ſays, it is plain, that the advantages here ſaid to be derived from the plantations by *England*, muſt be meant chiefly of the continental colonies.

"I ſhall ſum up my whole remarks on our *American* colonies, with this obſervation, that as they are a certain annual revenue of SEVERAL MILLIONS STERLING to their mother country, they ought carefully to be protected, duly encouraged, and every opportunity that preſents, improved for their increment and advantage, as every one they can poſſibly reap, muſt at laſt return to us with intereſt."

BEAWES's *Lex Merc. Red.*

"We may ſafely advance, that our trade and navigation are greatly increaſed by our colonies, and that they really are a ſource of treaſure and naval power to this kingdom, ſince THEY WORK FOR US, and THEIR TREASURE CENTERS HERE. Before their ſettlement, our manufactures were few, and thoſe but indifferent; the number of *English* merchants very ſmall, and the whole ſhipping of the nation much inferior to what now belongs to the Northern Colonies only. *Theſe are certain facts*. But ſince their eſtabliſhment, our condition has altered for the better, almoſt to a degree beyond credibility.---Our MANUFACTURES are prodigiouſly increaſed, chiefly by the demand for them in the plantations, where they AT LEAST TAKE OFF ONE HALF, and ſupply us with many valuable commodities for exportation, which is as great an emolument to the mother kingdom, as to the plantations themſelves."

POSTLETHWAYT's *Univ. Diſt. of Trade and Commerce*.

"Moſt of the nations of *Europe* have interfered with us, more or leſs, in divers of our ſtaple manufactures, within half a century, not only in our woollen, but in our lead and tin manufactures, as well as our fisheries."

POSTLETHWAYT, *ibid*.

"The inhabitants of our colonies, by carrying on a trade with their foreign neighbours, do not only occaſion a greater quantity of the goods and merchandizes of *Europe* being ſent from hence to them, and a greater quantity of the product of *America* to be ſent from them hither, which would otherwiſe be carried from,

and



HITHERTO *Great-Britain* has been contented with her prosperity. Moderation has been the rule of her conduct. But now, a generous humane people, that so often has protected the liberty of *strangers*, is enflamed into an attempt to tear a privilege from her own children, which, if executed, must, in their opinion, sink them into slaves: AND FOR WHAT? For a pernicious power, not necessary to her, as her own experience may convince her; but horribly dreadful and detestable to them.

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and brought to Europe by foreigners, but an increase of the seamen and navigation in those parts, which is of great strength and security, as well as of great advantage to our plantations in general. And though some of our colonies are not only for preventing the importations of all goods of the same species they produce, but suffer particular planters to keep great runs of land in their possession uncultivated, with design to prevent new settlements, whereby they imagine the prices of their commodities may be affected; yet if it be considered, that the markets of *Great-Britain* depend on the markets of ALL *Europe* in general, and that the *European* markets in general depend on the proportion between the annual consumption and the whole quantity of each species annually produced by ALL nations; it must follow, that whether we or foreigners are the producers, carriers, importers and exporters of *American* produce, yet their respective prices in each colony (the difference of freight, customs and importations considered) will always bear proportion to the general consumption of the whole quantity of each sort, produced in all colonies, and in all parts, allowing only for the usual contingencies that trade and commerce, agriculture and manufactures, are liable to in all countries."

POSTLETHWAYT, *ibid.*

"It is certain, that from the very time Sir *William Raleigh*, the father of our *English* colonies, and his associates, first projected these establishments, there have been persons who have found an interest, in misrepresenting, or lessening the value of them----The attempts were called chimerical and dangerous. Afterwards many malignant suggestions were made about sacrificing so many *Englishmen* to the obstinate desire of settling colonies in countries which then produced very little advantage. But as these difficulties were gradually surmounted, those complaints vanished. No sooner were these lamentations over, but others arose in their stead; when it could be no longer said, that the colonies were useless, it was alledged that they were not useful enough to their mother country; that while we were loaded with taxes, they were absolutely free; that the planters lived like princes, while the inhabitants of *England* laboured hard for a tolerable subsistence."

POSTLETHWAYT, *ibid.*

"Before the settlement of these colonies," says *Postlethwayt*, "our manufactures were few, and those but indifferent. In those days we had not only our naval stores, but our ships from our neighbours. *Germany* furnished us with all things made of metal, even to nails. Wine, paper, linens, and a thousand other things, came from *France*. *Portugal* supplied us with sugar; all the products of *America* were poured into us from *Spain*; and the *Venetians* and *Genoese* retailed to us the commodities of the *East-Indies*, at their own price."

"If it be asked, whether foreigners, for what goods they take of us, do not pay on that consumption a great portion of our taxes? It is admitted they do."

POSTLETHWAYT's *Great-Britain's True System.*

"If we are afraid that one day or other the colonies will revolt, and set up for themselves, as some seem to apprehend, let us not drive them to a necessity to feel themselves independent of us; as they will do, the moment they perceive that THEY CAN BE SUPPLIED WITH ALL THINGS FROM WITHIN THEMSELVES, and do not need our assistance. If we would keep them still dependent upon their mother country, and, in some respects,

*subservient*



It seems extremely probable, that when cool, dispassionate posterity, shall consider the affectionate intercourse, the reciprocal benefits, and the unsuspecting confidence, that have subsisted between these colonies and their parent country, for such a length of time,

*subservient to her views and welfare; let us make it their INTEREST always to be so."*

TUCKER on Trade.

"Our colonies, while they have *English* blood in their veins, and have relations in *England*, and WHILE THEY CAN GET BY TRADING WITH US, the stronger and greater they grow, the more this crown and kingdom will get by them; and nothing but such an arbitrary power as shall make them desperate, can bring them to rebel."

DAVENANT on the Plantation Trade.

"The Northern colonies are not upon the same footing as those of the South; and having a worse soil to improve, they must find the recompence some other way, which only can be in property and dominion: Upon which score, any INNOVATIONS in the form of government there, should be cautiously examined, for fear of entering upon measures, by which the industry of the inhabitants be quite discouraged. 'Tis ALWAYS UNFORTUNATE for a people, either by CONSENT, or upon COMPULSION, to depart from their PRIMITIVE INSTITUTIONS, and THOSE FUNDAMENTALS, by which they WERE FIRST UNITED TOGETHER."

*Idem.*

The most effectual way of uniting the colonies, is to make it their common interest to oppose the designs and attempts of *Great-Britain*.

"All wise states will well consider how to preserve the advantages arising from colonies, and avoid the evils. And I conceive that there can be but two ways in nature to hinder them from throwing off their dependence; one to keep it out of their power, and the other, out of their will. The first must be by force, and the latter, by using them well, and keeping them employed in such productions, and making such manufactures, as will support themselves and families comfortably, and procure them wealth too, and at least not prejudice their mother country.

"Force can never be used effectually to answer the end, without destroying the colonies themselves. Liberty and encouragement are necessary to carry people thither, and to keep them together when they are there; and violence will hinder both. Any body of troops, considerable enough to awe them, and keep them in subjection, under the direction too of a needy governor, often sent thither to make his fortune, and at such a distance from any application for redress, will soon put an end to all planting, and leave the country to the soldiers alone, and if it did not, would eat up all the profit of the colony. For this reason, arbitrary countries have not been equally successful in planting colonies with free ones; and what they have done in that kind, has either been by force, at a vast expence, or by departing from the nature of their government, and giving such privileges to planters as were denied to their other subjects. And I dare say, that a few prudent laws, and a little prudent conduct, would soon give us far the greatest share of the riches of all *America*, perhaps drive many of other nations out of it, or into our colonies for shelter.

"There are so many exigencies in all states, so many foreign wars, and domestic disturbances, that these colonies CAN NEVER WANT OPPORTUNITIES, if they watch for them, to do what they shall find their interest to do; and therefore we ought to take all the precautions in our power, that it shall never be their interest to act against that of their native country; an evil which can no otherwise be averted, than by keeping them fully employed in such trades as will increase their own, as well as our wealth; for it is much to be feared, if we do not find employment for them, they may find it for us; the interest of the mother country, is always to keep them dependent, and so employed; and it requires all her address to do it; and it is certainly more easily and effectually done by gentle and insensible methods, than by power alone."

CATO's Letters.



time, they will execrate, with the bitterest curses, the infamous memory of those men, whose pestilential ambition unnecessarily, wantonly, cruelly, first opened the sources of civil discord between them; first turned their love into jealousy; and first taught these provinces, filled with grief and anxiety, to enquire----

*Mens ubi materna est?*

Where is maternal affection?

A F A R M E R.

## L E T T E R VI.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

**I**T may perhaps be objected against the arguments that have been offered to the public, concerning the legal power of the parliament, “that it has always exercised the power of imposing duties, for the purposes of raising a revenue on the productions of these colonies carried to *Great-Britain*, which may be called a tax on them.” To this objection I answer, that this is no violation of the rights of the colonies, it being implied in the relation between them and *Great-Britain*, that they should not carry such commodities to other nations, as should enable them to interfere with the mother country. The imposition of duties on these commodities, when brought to her, is only a consequence of her parental right; and if the point is thoroughly examined, the duties will be found to be laid on the people of the mother country. Whatever they are, they must proportionably raise the price of the goods, and consequently must be paid by the consumers. In this light they were considered by the parliament in the 25th *Charles II.* Chap. 7, Sect. 2, which says, that the productions of the plantations were carried from one to another free from all customs, “while the subjects of this your kingdom of *England* have paid great customs and impositions for what of them have been SPENT HERE,” &c.

BESIDES, if *Great-Britain* exports these commodities again, the duties will injure her own trade, so that she cannot hurt us, without plainly and immediately hurting herself; and this is our check against her acting arbitrarily in this respect.

\* It may be perhaps further objected, “that it being granted that statutes made for regulating trade, are binding upon us, it will

\* If any one should observe that no opposition has been made to the legality of the 4th *Geo. III.* Chap. 15, which is the FIRST act of parliament that ever imposed duties on the importations into *America*, for the *expressed* purpose of raising a revenue there; I answer----First, ‘That tho’ the act expressly mentions the



will be difficult for any persons, but the makers of the laws, to determine, which of them are made for the regulating of trade, and which for raising a revenue; and that from hence may arise confusion."

To this I answer, that the objection is of no force in the present case, or such as resemble it; because the act now in question, is formed *expressly* FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE.

HOWEVER, supposing the design of parliament had not been *expressed*, the objection seems to me of no weight, with regard to the influence which those who may make it, might expect it ought to have on the conduct of these colonies.

It is true, that *impositions for raising a revenue*, may be hereafter called *regulations of trade*: But names will not change the nature of things. Indeed we ought firmly to believe, what is an undoubted truth, confirmed by the unhappy experience of many states heretofore free, that UNLESS THE MOST WATCHFUL ATTENTION BE EXERTED, A NEW SERVITUDE MAY BE SLIPPED UPON US, UNDER THE SANCTION OF USUAL AND RESPECTABLE TERMS.

THUS the *Cæsars* ruined the *Roman* liberty, under the titles of *tribunical* and *dictatorial* authorities---old and venerable dignities, known in the most flourishing times of freedom. In imitation of the same policy, *James II.* when he meant to establish popery, talked of liberty of conscience, the most sacred of all liberties; and had thereby almost deceived the Dissenters into destruction.

ALL artful rulers, who strive to extend their power beyond its just limits, endeavor to give to their attempts as much semblance of

the raising a revenue in *America*, yet it seems that it had as much in view the "improving and securing the trade between the same and *Great-Britain*," which words are part of its title: And the preamble says, "Whereas it is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the revenue of this kingdom, and for extending and securing the navigation and commerce between *Great-Britain*, and your Majesty's dominions in *America*, which by the peace have been so happily extended and enlarged," &c. Secondly, *All* the duties mentioned in that act are imposed solely on the *productions and manufactures of foreign countries*, and not a single duty laid on any production or manufacture of our mother country. Thirdly, the authority of the provincial assemblies is not therein so plainly attacked as by the last act, which makes provision for defraying the charges of the "administration of justice," and "the support of civil government." Fourthly, That it being doubtful, whether the intention of the 4th *Geo. III.* Chap. 15, was not as much to regulate trade, as to raise a revenue, the minds of the people here were wholly engrossed by the terror of the *Stamp-Act*, then impending over them, about the intention of which there could be no doubt.

These reasons so far distinguish the 4th *Geo. III.* Chap. 15, from the last act, that it is not to be wondered at, that the first should have been submitted to, tho' the last should excite the most universal and spirited opposition. For this will be found, on the strictest examination, to be, in the principle on which it is founded, and in the consequences that must attend it, if possible, more destructive than the *Stamp-Act*. It is, to speak plainly, a prodigy in our laws; not having one *British* feature.



of legality as possible. Those who succeed them may venture to go a little further; for each new encroachment will be strengthened by a former. “† That which is now supported by examples, growing old, will become an example itself,” and thus support fresh usurpations.

A FREE people therefore can never be too quick in observing, nor too firm in opposing the beginnings of *alteration* either in *form* or *reality*, respecting institutions formed for their security. The first kind of alteration leads to the last: Yet, on the other hand, nothing is more certain, than that the *forms* of liberty may be retained, when the *substance* is gone. In government, as well as in religion, “The *letter* killeth, but the *spirit* giveth life †.”

I WILL beg leave to enforce this remark by a few instances. The crown, by the constitution, has the prerogative of creating peers. The existence of that order, in due number and dignity, is essential to the constitution; and if the crown did not exercise that prerogative, the peerage must have long since decreased so much as to have lost its proper influence. Suppose a prince, for some unjust purposes, should, from time to time, advance so many needy, profligate wretches to that rank, that all the independence of the house of lords should be destroyed; there would then be a manifest violation of the constitution, *under the appearance of using legal prerogative*.

THE house of commons claims the privilege of forming all money bills, and will not suffer either of the other branches of the legislature to add to, or alter them; contending that their power simply extends to an acceptance or rejection of them. This privilege appears to be just: But under pretence of this just privilege, the house of commons has claimed a licence of tacking to money bills, clauses relating to things of a totally different kind, and thus forcing them in a manner on the king and lords. This seems to be an abuse of that privilege, and it may be vastly more abused. Suppose a future house, influenced by some displaced, discontented demagogues---in a time of danger, should tack to a money bill, something so injurious to the king and peers, that they would not assent to it, and yet the commons should obstinately insist on it; the whole kingdom would be exposed to ruin by them, *under the appearance of maintaining a valuable privilege*.

IN these cases it might be difficult for a while to determine, whether the king intended to exercise his prerogative in a constitutional manner or not; or whether the commons insisted on their demand factiously, or for the public good: But surely the conduct of the crown, or of the house, would in time sufficiently explain itself.

OUGHT not the PEOPLE therefore to watch? to observe facts? to search into causes? to investigate designs? And have they not a right

† TACITUS.

† 2 COR. iii. 6.



right of JUDGING from the evidence before them, on no sliſhter points than their *liberty* and *happineſs*? It would be leſs than trifling, wherever a *British* government is eſtabliſhed, to make uſe of any arguments to prove ſuch a right. It is ſufficient to remind the reader of the day, on the anniversary of which the firſt of theſe letters is dated.

I WILL now apply what has been ſaid to the preſent queſtion.

THE *nature* of any impoſitions laid by parliament on theſe colonies, muſt determine the *deſign* in laying them. It may not be eaſy in every inſtance to diſcover that deſign. Wherever it is doubtful, I think ſubmiſſion cannot be dangerous; nay, it muſt be right; for, in my opinion, there is no privilege theſe colonies claim, which they ought in *duty* and *prudence* more earneſtly to maintain and defend, than the authority of the *British*-parliament to regulate the trade of all her dominions. Without this authority, the benefits ſhe enjoys from our commerce, muſt be loſt to her: The bleſſings we enjoy from our dependence upon her, muſt be loſt to us. Her ſtrength muſt decay; her glory vaniſh; and ſhe cannot ſuffer without our partaking in her miſfortune. *Let us therefore cheriſh her intereſts as our own, and give her every thing, that it becomes FREEMEN to give or to receive.*

THE *nature* of any impoſitions ſhe may lay upon us may, in general, be known, by conſidering how far they relate to the preſerving, in due order, the connection between the ſeveral parts of the *British* empire. One thing we may be aſſured of, which is this----Whenever ſhe impoſes duties on commodities, to be paid only upon their exportation from *Great-Britain* to theſe colonies, it is not a regulation of trade, but a deſign to raiſe a revenue upon us. Other inſtances may happen, which it may not be neceſſary at preſent to dwell on. I hope theſe colonies will never, to their lateſt exiſtence, want underſtanding ſufficient to diſcover the intentions of thoſe who rule over them, nor the reſolution neceſſary for aſſerting their intereſts. They will always have the ſame rights, that all free ſtates have, of judging when their privileges are invaded, and of uſing all prudent meaſures for preſerving them.

*Quocirca vivite fortes*

*Fortiaque adverſis opponite pectora rebus.*

Wherefore keep up your ſpirits, and gallantly oppoſe this adverſe courſe of affairs.

A F A R M E R.

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## L E T T E R VII.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

**T**HIS letter is intended more particularly for such of you, whose employments in life may have prevented your attending to the consideration of some points that are of great and public importance: For many such persons there must be even in these colonies, where the inhabitants in general are more intelligent than any other people whatever, as has been remarked by strangers, and it seems with reason.

SOME of you, perhaps, filled, as I know your breasts are, with loyalty to our most excellent Prince, and with love to our dear mother country, may feel yourselves inclined, by the affections of your hearts, to approve every action of those whom you so much venerate and esteem. A prejudice thus flowing from goodness of disposition, is amiable indeed. I wish it could be indulged without danger. Did I think this possible, the error should have been adopted, and not opposed by me. But in truth, all men are subject to the frailties of nature; and therefore whatever regard we entertain for the *persons* of those who govern us, we should always remember that their conduct, as *rulers*, may be influenced by human infirmities.

WHEN any laws, injurious to these colonies, are passed, we cannot suppose, that any injury was intended us by his Majesty, or the Lords. For the assent of the crown and peers to laws, seems, as far as I am able to judge, to have been vested in them, more for their own security, than for any other purpose. On the other hand, it is the particular business of the people, to enquire and discover what regulations are useful for themselves, and to digest and present them in the form of bills, to the other orders, to have them enacted into laws. Where these laws are to bind *themselves*, it may be expected, that the house of commons will very carefully consider them: But when they are making laws that are not designed to bind *themselves*, we cannot imagine that their deliberations will be as \* cautious and scrupulous, as in their own case.

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\* Many remarkable instances might be produced of the extraordinary inattention with which bills of great importance, concerning these colonies, have passed in parliament; which is owing, as it is supposed, to the bills being brought in by the persons who have points to carry, so artfully framed, that it is not easy for the members in general, in the haste of business, to discover their tendency.

The following instances shew the truth of this remark. When Mr. Green-ville, in the violence of reformation, formed the 4th Geo. III. Chap. 15th, for regulating the *American* trade, the word "*Ireland*" was dropt in the clause re-

lating



I AM told, that there is a wonderful address frequently used in carrying points in the house of commons, by persons experienced in these affairs.----That opportunities are watched---and sometimes votes are passed, that if all the members had been present, would have been rejected by a great majority. Certain it is, that when a powerful and artful man has determined on any measure against these colonies, he has always succeeded in his attempt. Perhaps therefore it will be proper for us, whenever any oppressive act affecting us is passed, to attribute it to the inattention of the members of the house of commons, and to the malevolence or ambition of some factious great man, rather than to any other cause.

Now I do verily believe, that the late act of parliament, imposing duties on paper, &c. was formed by Mr. *Greenville*, and his party, because it is evidently a part of that plan, by which he endeavoured to render himself POPULAR at home; and I do also believe, that not one half of the members of the house of commons, even of those who heard it read, did perceive how destructive it was to *American* freedom. For this reason, as it is usual in *Great-Britain*, to consider the King's speech as the speech of the ministry, it may be right here to consider this act as the act of a party----perhaps I should speak more properly, if I was to use another term.

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lating to our iron and lumber, so that we could send these articles to no part of *Europe*, but to *Great-Britain*. This was so unreasonable a restriction, and so contrary to the sentiments of the legislature for many years before, that it is surprizing it should not have been taken notice of in the house. However the bill passed into a law. But when the matter was explained, this restriction was taken off by a subsequent act. I cannot positively say how long after the taking off this restriction, as I have not the act, but I think, in less than 18 months, another act of parliament passed, in which the word "*Ireland*" was left out, just as it had been before. The matter being a second time explained, was a second time regulated.

Now if it be considered, that the omission mentioned struck off with ONE word SO VERY GREAT A PART OF OUR TRADE, it must appear remarkable; and equally so is the method, by which *Rice* became an enumerated commodity.

"The enumeration was obtained (says Mr. [a] *Gee*) by one *Cole*, a Captain of a ship, employed by a company then trading to *Carolina*, for several ships going from *England* thither, and purchasing rice for *Portugal*, prevented the aforesaid Captain of a loading. Upon his coming home, he possessed one Mr. *Lowndes*, a member of parliament (who was very frequently employed to prepare bills) with an opinion, that carrying rice directly to *Portugal*, was a prejudice to the trade of *England*, and PRIVATELY got a clause into an act, to make it an enumerated commodity; by which means he secured a freight to himself. BUT THE CONSEQUENCE PROVED A VAST LOSS TO THE NATION."

I find that this clause, "PRIVATELY got into an act," FOR THE BENEFIT OF CAPTAIN COLE, to the "VAST LOSS OF THE NATION," is foisted into the 3d and 4th *Ann*, Chap. 5th, intituled, "An act for granting to her Majesty a further subsidy on wines and merchandizes imported," with which it has no more connection, than with 34th *Edward I.* the 34th and 35th of *Henry VIII.* and the 25th of *Charles II.* WHICH PROVIDE, THAT NO PERSON SHALL BE TAXED BUT BY HIMSELF OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE.

[a] *Gee* on Trade, page 32.



THERE are two ways of laying taxes. One is, by imposing a certain sum on particular kinds of property, to be paid by the *user* or *consumer*, or by rating the *person* at a certain sum. The other is, by imposing a certain sum on particular kinds of property, to be paid by the *seller*.

WHEN a man pays the first sort of tax, he *knows with certainty* that he pays so much money *for a tax*. The *consideration* for which he pays it, is remote, and, it may be, does not occur to him. He is sensible too, that he is *commanded and obliged* to pay it *as a tax*; and therefore people are apt to be displeased with this sort of tax.

THE other sort of tax is submitted to in a very different manner. The purchaser of any article, very seldom reflects that the seller raises his price, so as to indemnify himself for the tax *he* has paid. He knows that the prices of things are continually fluctuating, and if he thinks about the tax, he thinks at the same time, in all probability, that he *might* have paid as much, if the article he buys had not been taxed. He gets something *visible and agreeable* for his money; and tax and price are so confounded together, that he cannot separate, or does not chuse to take the trouble of separating them.

THIS mode of taxation therefore is the mode suited to arbitrary and oppressive governments. The love of liberty is so natural to the human heart, that unfeeling tyrants think themselves obliged to accommodate their schemes as much as they can to the appearance of justice and reason, and to deceive those whom they resolve to destroy, or oppress, by presenting to them a miserable picture of freedom, when the inestimable original is lost.

THIS policy did not escape the cruel and rapacious *N E R O*. That monster, apprehensive that his crimes might endanger his authority and life, thought proper to do some popular acts, to secure the obedience of his subjects. Among other things, says *Tacitus*, “ he remitted the twenty-fifth part of the price on the sale of slaves, but rather in *shew* than *reality*; for the *seller* being ordered to pay it, it became part of the price to the *buyer* ||.”

THIS is the reflection of the judicious *Historian*; but the deluded *people* gave their infamous Emperor full credit for his false generosity. Other nations have been treated in the same manner the *Romans* were. The honest, industrious *Germans*, who are settled in different parts of this continent, can inform us, that it was this sort of tax that drove them from their native land to our woods, at that time the seats of perfect and undisturbed freedom.

THEIR Princes, enflamed by the lust of power, and the lust of avarice, two furies that the more they are gorged, the more hungry they grow, transgressed the bounds they ought, in regard to themselves, to have observed. To keep up the deception in the minds



of subjects, “there must be,” says † a very learned author, “some proportion between the impost and the value of the commodity; wherefore there ought not to be an excessive duty upon merchandizes of little value. There are countries in which the duty exceeds seventeen or eighteen times the value of the commodity. In this case the Prince removes the illusion. His subjects plainly see they are dealt with in an unreasonable manner, which renders them most exquisitely sensible of their slavish situation.” From hence it appears, that subjects may be ground down into misery by this sort of taxation, as well as by the former. They will be as much impoverished, if their money is taken from them in this way as in the other; and that it will be taken, may be more evident, by attending to a few more considerations.

THE merchant or importer, who pays the duty at first, will not consent to be so much money out of pocket. He therefore proportionably raises the price of his goods. It may then be said to be a contest between him and the person offering to buy, who shall lose the duty. This must be decided by the nature of the commodities, and the purchaser's demand for them. If they are mere luxuries, he is at liberty to do as he pleases, and if he buys, he does it voluntarily: But if they are absolute *necessaries*, or *conveniences*, which use and custom have made requisite for the comfort of life, and which he is not permitted, by the power imposing the duty, *to get elsewhere*, there the seller has a plain advantage, and the buyer *must* pay the duty. In fact, the seller is nothing less than a collector of the tax for the power that imposed it. If these duties then are extended to the necessaries and conveniences of life in general, and enormously encreased, the people must at length become indeed “most exquisitely sensible of their slavish situation.” Their happiness therefore entirely depends on the moderation of those who have authority to impose the duties.

I SHALL now apply these observations to the late act of parliament. Certain duties are thereby imposed on paper and glass, imported into these colonies. By the laws of *Great-Britain* we are prohibited to get these articles from any other part of the world. We cannot at present, nor for many years to come, tho' we should apply ourselves to these manufactures with the utmost industry, make enough ourselves for our own use. That paper and glass are not only convenient, but absolutely necessary for us, I imagine very few will contend. Some perhaps, who think mankind grew wicked and luxurious, as soon as they found out another way of communicating their sentiments than by speech, and another way of dwelling than in caves, may advance so whimsical an opinion. But I presume no body will take the unnecessary trouble of refuting them.

FROM

† *Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws*, Book 13, Chap. 8.



FROM these remarks I think it evident, that we *must* use paper and glass; that what we use *must* be *British*; and that we *must* pay the duties imposed, unless those who sell these articles, are so generous as to make us presents of the duties they pay.

SOME persons may think this act of no consequence, because the duties are so *small*. A fatal error. *That* is the very circumstance most alarming to me. For I am convinced, that the authors of this law would never have obtained an act to raise so trifling a sum as it must do, had they not intended by *it* to establish a *precedent* for future use. To console ourselves with the *smallness* of the duties, is to walk deliberately into the snare that is set for us, praising the *neatness* of the workmanship. Suppose the duties imposed by the late act could be paid by these distressed colonies with the utmost ease, and that the purposes to which they are to be applied, were the most reasonable and equitable that can be conceived, the contrary of which I hope to demonstrate before these letters are concluded; yet even in such a supposed case, these colonies ought to regard the act with abhorrence. FOR WHO AREA FREE PEOPLE? Not *those*, over whom government is reasonably and equitably exercised, but *those*, who live under a government so *constitutionally checked and controuled*, that proper provision is made against its being otherwise exercised.

THE late act is founded on the destruction of this constitutional security. If the parliament have a right to lay a duty of Four Shillings and Eight-pence on a hundred weight of glass, or a ream of paper, they have a right to lay a duty of any other sum on either. They may raise the duty, as the author before quoted says has been done in some countries, till it "exceeds seventeen or eighteen times the value of the commodity." In short, if they have a right to levy a tax of *one penny* upon us, they have a right to levy a *million* upon us: For where does their right stop? At any given number of Pence, Shillings or Pounds? To attempt to limit their right, after granting it to exist at all, is as contrary to reason---as granting it to exist at all, is contrary to justice. If *they* have any right to tax *us*---then, whether *our own money* shall continue in *our own pockets* or not, depends no longer on *us*, but on *them*. † "There is nothing which" we "can call our own; or, to use the words of Mr. Locke---WHAT PROPERTY HAVE" WE "IN THAT, WHICH ANOTHER MAY, BY RIGHT, TAKE, WHEN HE PLEASES, TO HIMSELF?"

THESE duties, which will inevitably be levied upon us---which are now levying upon us---are *expressly* laid FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF TAKING MONEY. This is the true definition of "*taxes*." They are therefore *taxes*. This money is to be taken from *us*.

We



*We are therefore taxed. Those who are taxed without their own consent, expressed by themselves or their representatives, are slaves. We are taxed without our own consent, expressed by ourselves or our representatives. We are therefore----- § S L A V E S.*

*Miserabile vulgus.  
A miserable tribe.*

## A F A R M E R.

§ “It is my opinion, that this kingdom has no right to lay A TAX upon the colonies.”---“The *Americans* are the *sons*, not the *bastards* of *England*.”---“The distinction between LEGISLATION and TAXATION is essentially necessary to liberty.”---“The *commons* of *America*, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of this their constitutional right, of GIVING AND GRANTING THEIR OWN MONEY. They would have been *SLAVES*, if they had not enjoyed it.” “The idea of a *virtual representation* of *America* in this house, is the most contemptible idea, that ever entered into the head of man.---It does not deserve a serious refutation.”

*Mr. Pitt's speech on the Stamp-Act.*

That great and excellent man Lord Camden, maintains the same opinion. His speech in the house of peers, on the declaratory bill of the sovereignty of *Great-Britain* over the colonies, has lately appeared in our papers. The following extracts so perfectly agree with, and confirm the sentiments avowed in these letters, that it is hoped the inserting them in this note will be excused.

“As the Affair is of the *utmost importance*, and in its consequences may involve the *fate of kingdoms*, I took the strictest review of my arguments; I re-examined all my authorities; fully determined, if I found myself mistaken, publicly to own my mistake, and give up my opinion: But my searches have more and more convinced me, that the *British* parliament have *NO RIGHT TO TAX* the *Americans*.”---“Nor is the doctrine new; it is as old as the constitution; it grew up with it; indeed it is its support.”---“TAXATION and REPRESENTATION are inseparably united. *GOD* hath joined them: No *British* parliament can separate them: To endeavour to do it, is to stab our vitals.”

“My position is this---I repeat it---I will maintain it to my last hour---TAXATION and REPRESENTATION are inseparable---this position is founded on the laws of nature; it is more, it is itself AN ETERNAL LAW OF NATURE; for whatever is a man's own, is absolutely his own; NO MAN HATH A RIGHT TO TAKE IT FROM HIM WITHOUT HIS CONSENT, either expressed by himself or representative; *whoever attempts to do it, attempts an injury*; WHOEVER DOES IT, *COMMITTS A ROBBERY*; HE THROWS DOWN THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LIBERTY AND SLAVERY.”---“There is not a *blade of grass*, in the most obscure corner of the kingdom, which is not, which was not ever *represented*, since the constitution began: There is not a *blade of grass*, which, when taxed, *was not taxed by the consent of the proprietor*.” “The forefathers of the *Americans* did not leave their native country, and subject themselves to every danger and distress, TO BE REDUCED TO A STATE OF SLAVERY. They did not give up their rights: They looked for protection, and not for CHAINS, from their mother country. By her they expected to be defended in the possession of their property, and not to be deprived of it: For should the present power continue, THERE IS NOTHING WHICH THEY CAN CALL THEIR OWN; or, to use the words of Mr. Locke, “*WHAT PROPERTY HAVE THEY IN THAT, WHICH ANOTHER MAY, BY RIGHT, TAKE, WHEN HE PLEASES, TO HIMSELF?*”



## L E T T E R R VIII.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

**I**N my opinion, a dangerous example is set in the last act relating to these colonies. The power of parliament to levy money upon us for raising a revenue, is therein *asserted* and *exerted*. Regarding the act on this single principle, I must again repeat, and I think it my duty to repeat, that to me it appears to be *unconstitutional*.

No man, who considers the conduct of the parliament since the repeal of the *Stamp-Act*, and the disposition of many people at home, can doubt, that the chief object of attention there, is, to use Mr. *Greenville's* expression, “ providing that the DEPENDENCE and OBEDIENCE of the colonies be asserted and maintained.”

UNDER the influence of this notion, instantly on repealing the *Stamp-Act*, an act passed, declaring the power of parliament to bind these colonies *in all cases whatever*. This however was only planting a barren tree, that cast a *shade* indeed over the colonies, but yielded no *fruit*. It being determined to enforce the authority on which the *Stamp-Act* was founded, the parliament having never renounced the right, as Mr. *Pitt* advised them to do; and it being thought proper to disguise that authority in such a manner, as not again to alarm the colonies; some little time was required to find a method, by which both these points should be united. At last the ingenuity of Mr. *Greenville* and his party accomplished the matter, as it was thought, in “ an act for granting certain duties in the *British* colonies and plantations in *America*, for allowing drawbacks,” &c. which is the title of the act laying duties on paper, &c.

THE parliament having several times before imposed duties to be paid in *America*, IT WAS EXPECTED, NO DOUBT, THAT THE REPETITION OF SUCH A MEASURE WOULD BE PASSED OVER, AS AN USUAL THING. But to have done this, without expressly “ asserting and maintaining” the power of parliament to take our money without our consent, and to apply it as they please, would  
not

It is impossible to read this speech, and Mr. *Pitt's*, and not be charmed with the generous zeal for the rights of mankind that glows in every sentence. These great and good men, animated by the subject they speak upon, seem to rise above all the former glorious exertions of their abilities. A foreigner might be tempted to think they are *Americans*, asserting with all the ardor of patriotism, and all the anxiety of apprehension, the cause of their native land--- and not *Britons*, striving to stop their mistaken countrymen from oppressing others. Their reasoning is not only just---it is, as Mr. *Hume* says of the eloquence of *Demosthenes*, “ vehement.” It is disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continual stream of argument.



not have been, in Mr. *Greenville's* opinion, sufficiently declarative of its supremacy, nor sufficiently depressive of *American* freedom.

THEREFORE it is, that in this memorable act we find it *expressly* “ provided,” that money shall be levied upon us without our consent, for PURPOSES, that render it, *if possible*, more dreadful than the *Stamp-Act*.

THAT act, alarming as it was, declared, the money thereby to be raised, should be applied “ towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting and securing the *British* colonies and plantations in *America* :” And it is evident from the whole act, that by the word “ *British*,” were intended colonies and plantations settled by *British* people, and not generally, those subject to the *British* crown. That act therefore seemed to have something gentle and kind in its intention, and to aim only at *our own welfare* : But the act now objected to, imposes duties upon the *British* colonies, “ to defray the expences of defending, protecting and securing *his Majesty's* DOMINIONS in *America*.”

WHAT a change of words ! What an *incomputable* addition to the expences intended by the *Stamp-Act* ! “ *His Majesty's* DOMINIONS” comprehend not only the *British* colonies, but also the conquered provinces of *Canada* and *Florida*, and the *British* garrisons of *Nova-Scotia* ; for these do not deserve the name of colonies.

WHAT justice is there in making us pay for “ defending, protecting and securing” THESE PLACES ? What benefit can we, or have we ever derived from them ? None of them was conquered for us ; nor will “ be defended, protected or secured ” for us.

IN fact, however advantageous the subduing or keeping any of these countries may be to *Great-Britain*, the acquisition is greatly injurious to these colonies. Our chief property consists in lands. These would have been of much greater value, if such prodigious additions had not been made to the *British* territories on this continent. The natural increase of our own people, if confined within the colonies, would have raised the value still higher and higher every fifteen or twenty years : Besides, we should have lived more compactly together, and have been therefore more able to resist any enemy. But now the inhabitants will be thinly scattered over an immense region, as those who want settlements, will chuse to make new ones, rather than pay great prices for old ones.

THESE are the consequences to the colonies, of the hearty assistance they gave to *Great-Britain* in the late war-----a war undertaken solely for her own benefit. The objects of it were, the securing to herself the rich tracts of land on the back of these colonies, with the *Indian* trade ; and *Nova-Scotia*, with the fishery. These, and much more, has that kingdom gained ; but the inferior animals, that hunted with the lion, have been amply rewarded for all the sweat and blood their loyalty cost them, by the honor of having sweated and bled in such company.

I WILL



I WILL not go so far as to say, that *Canada* and *Nova-Scotia* are curbs on *New-England*; the *chain of forts* through the back woods, on the *Middle Provinces*; and *Florida*, on the *rest*: But I will venture to say, that if the products of *Canada*, *Nova-Scotia*, and *Florida*, deserve any consideration, the two first of them are only rivals of our Northern Colonies, and the other of our Southern.

It has been said, that without the conquest of these countries, the colonies could not have been “protected, defended and secured.” If that is true, it may with as much propriety be said, that *Great-Britain* could not have been “defended, protected and secured,” without that conquest: For the colonies are parts of her empire, which it *as much* concerns *her* as *them* to keep out of the hands of any other power.

BUT these colonies, when they were much weaker, defended themselves, before this Conquest was made; and could again do it, against any that might properly be called *their* Enemies. If *France* and *Spain* indeed should attack them, *as members of the British empire*, perhaps they might be distressed; but it would be in a *British* quarrel.

THE largest account I have seen of the number of people in *Canada*, does not make them exceed 90,000. *Florida* can hardly be said to have any inhabitants. It is computed that there are in our colonies 3,000,000. Our force therefore must increase with a disproportion to the growth of *their* strength, that would render us very safe.

THIS being the state of the case, I cannot think it just that these colonies, labouring under so many misfortunes, should be loaded with *taxes*, to maintain countries, not only not useful, but hurtful to them. The support of *Canada* and *Florida* cost yearly, it is said, half a million sterling. From hence, we may make some guess of the load that is to be laid *upon* us; for we are not only to “defend, protect and secure” *them*, but also to make “an adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such provinces where it shall be found necessary.”

NOT one of the provinces of *Canada*, *Nova-Scotia*, or *Florida*, has ever defrayed *these expences within itself*: And if the duties imposed by the last statute are collected, *all of them together*, according to the best information I can get, will not pay *one quarter as much as Pennsylvania alone*. So that the *British colonies* are to be drained of the rewards of their labor, to cherish the scorching sands of *Florida*, and the icy rocks of *Canada* and *Nova-Scotia*, which never will return to us one farthing that we send to them.

GREAT-BRITAIN---I mean, the ministry in *Great-Britain*, has cantoned *Canada* and *Florida* out into *five* or *six* governments, and may form *as many more*. There now are *fourteen* or *fifteen* regiments on this continent; and there soon may be *as many more*. To



make “ an adequate provision” FOR ALL THESE EXPENCES, is, no doubt, to be the *inheritance* of the colonies.

CAN any man believe that the duties upon paper, &c. are the *last* that will be laid for these purposes? It is in vain to hope, that because it is imprudent to lay duties on the exportation of manufactures from a mother country to colonies, as it may promote manufactures among them, that this consideration will prevent such a measure:

AMBITIOUS, artful men have made it popular, and whatever injustice or destruction will attend it in the opinion of the colonists, at home it will be thought just and salutary\*.

THE people of *Great-Britain* will be told, and have been told, that *they* are sinking under an immense debt---that great part of this debt has been contracted in defending the colonies---that *these* are so ungrateful and undutiful, that they will not contribute one mite to its payment---nor even to the support of the army now kept up for their “ defence and security”---that they are rolling in wealth, and are of so bold and republican a spirit, that they are aiming at independence---that the only way to retain them in “ obedience,” is to keep a strict watch over them, and to draw off part of their riches in *taxes*---and that every burden laid upon *them*, is taking off so much from *Great-Britain*.---These assertions will be generally believed, and the people will be persuaded that they cannot be too angry with their colonies, as that anger will be profitable to themselves.

IN truth, *Great-Britain* alone receives any benefit from *Canada*, *Nova-Scotia* and *Florida*; and therefore she alone ought to maintain them. The old maxim of the law is drawn from reason and justice, and never could be more properly applied, than in this case.

*Qui sentit commodum, sentire debet et onus.*

They who feel the benefit, ought to feel the burden.

A F A R M E R.

\* “ So credulous, as well as obstinate, are the people in believing every thing, which flatters their prevailing passion.

*Hume's Hist. of England.*



## L E T T E R IX.

My dear COUNTRYMEN,

I HAVE made some observations on the PURPOSES for which money is to be levied upon us by the late act of parliament. I shall now offer to your consideration some further reflections on that subject: And, unless I am greatly mistaken, if these purposes are accomplished according to the *expressed* intention of the act, they will be found effectually to *superfede* that authority in our respective assemblies, which is essential to liberty. The question is not, whether some branches shall be lopt off---The axe is laid to the root of the tree; and the whole body must infallibly perish, if we remain idle spectators of the work.

No free people ever existed, or can ever exist, without keeping, to use a common, but strong expression, “the purse strings,” in their own hands. Where this is the case, *they* have a *constitutional check* upon the administration, which may thereby be brought into order *without violence*: But where such a power is not lodged in the *people*, oppression proceeds uncontrouled in its career, till the governed, transported into rage, seek redress in the midst of blood and confusion.

THE elegant and ingenious Mr. *Hume*, speaking of the *Anglo Norman* government, says---“Princes and Ministers were too ignorant, to be themselves sensible of the advantage attending an equitable administration, and there was no established council or *assembly*, WHICH COULD PROTECT THE PEOPLE, and BY WITHDRAWING SUPPLIES, regularly and PEACEABLY admonish the king of his duty, and ENSURE THE EXECUTION OF THE LAWS.”

THUS this great man, whose political reflections are so much admired, makes *this power* one of the foundations of liberty.

THE *English* history abounds with instances, proving that *this* is the proper and successful way to obtain redress of grievances. How often have kings and ministers endeavored to throw off this legal curb upon them, by attempting to raise money by a variety of inventions, under pretence of law, without having recourse to parliament? And how often have they been brought to reason, and peaceably obliged to do justice, by the exertion of this constitutional authority of the people, vested in their representatives?

THE inhabitants of these colonies have, on numberless occasions, reaped the benefit of this authority *lodged in their assemblies*.

It has been for a long time, and now is, a constant instruction to all governors, *to obtain a PERMANENT support for the offices of government*. But as the author of “the administration of the colonies” says, “this order of the crown is generally, if not universally, rejected by the legislatures of the colonies.”



THEY perfectly know *how much* their grievances would be regarded, if they had *no other* method of engaging attention, than by *complaining*. Those who rule, are extremely apt to think well of the constructions made by themselves in support of their own power. *These* are frequently erroneous, and pernicious to those they govern. Dry remonstrances, to shew that such constructions are wrong and oppressive, carry very little weight with them, in the opinion of persons who gratify their own inclinations in making these constructions. *They* CANNOT understand the reasoning that opposes *their* power and desires. But let it be made *their interest* to understand such reasoning----and a *wonderful light* is instantly thrown upon the matter; and then, rejected remonstrances become as clear as \* “proofs of holy writ.”

THE three most important articles that our assemblies, or any legislatures can provide for, are, First---the defence of the society: Secondly---the administration of justice: And thirdly---the support of civil government.

NOTHING can properly regulate the expence of making provision for these occasions, but the *necessities* of the society; its *abilities*; the *conveniency* of the modes of levying money in it; the *manner* in which the laws have been executed; and the *conduct* of the officers of government: *All which* are circumstances, that *cannot* possibly be properly *known*, but by the society itself; or if they should be known, *will not* probably be properly *considered* but by that society.

IF money be raised upon us by *others*, without our consent, for our “defence,” those who are the judges in *levying* it, must also be the judges in *applying* it. Of consequence the money *said* to be taken from us for our defence, *may be employed* to our injury. We may be chained in by a line of fortifications----obliged to pay for the building and maintaining them----and be told, that they are for our defence. With what face can we dispute the fact, after having granted that those who *apply* the money, had a right to *levy* it? For surely, it is much easier for their wisdom to understand how to apply it in the best manner, than how to levy it in the best manner. Besides, the *right of levying* is of infinitely more consequence, than *that of applying*. The people of *England*, who would burst out into fury, if the crown should attempt to *levy* money by its own authority, have always assigned to the crown the *application* of money.

As to “the administration of justice”----the judges ought, in a well regulated state, to be equally independent of the executive and legislative powers. Thus in *England*, judges hold their commissions from the crown “*during good behavior*,” and have salaries, suitable to their dignity, *settled* on them by parliament. The

purity



purity of the courts of law since this establishment, is a proof of the wisdom with which it was made.

BUT in these colonies, how fruitless has been every attempt to have the judges appointed "*during good behavior?*" Yet whoever considers the matter will soon perceive, that *such commissions* are beyond all comparison more necessary in these colonies, than they were in *England*.

THE chief danger to the subject *there*, arose from the arbitrary *designs of the crown*; but *here*, the time may come, when we may have to contend with the *designs of the crown, and of a mighty kingdom*. What then must be our chance, when the laws of life and death are to be spoken by judges totally dependent on *that crown, and that kingdom*----sent over perhaps *from thence*----filled with *British prejudices*---and backed by a *STANDING army*---supported out of *OUR OWN* pockets, to "assert and maintain" *OUR OWN* "dependence and obedience."

BUT supposing that through the extreme lenity that will prevail in the government *through all future ages*, these colonies will never behold any thing like the campaign of chief justice *Jeffereys*, yet what innumerable acts of injustice may be committed, and how fatally may the principles of liberty be sapped, by a succession of judges *utterly independent of the people?* Before such judges the supple wretches, who cheerfully join in avowing sentiments inconsistent with freedom, will always meet with smiles; while the honest and brave men, who disdain to sacrifice their native land to their own advantage, but on every occasion boldly vindicate her cause, will constantly be regarded with frowns.

THERE are two other considerations relating to this head, that deserve the most serious attention.

By the late act, the officers of the customs are "impowered to enter into any *HOUSE, warehouse, shop, cellar, or other place, in the British colonies or plantations in America, to search for or seize prohibited or unaccustomed goods,*" &c. on "writs granted by the superior or supreme court of justice, having jurisdiction within such colony or plantation respectively."

IF we only reflect, that the judges of these courts are to be *during pleasure*---that they are to have "*adequate provision*" made for them, which is to continue *during their complaisant behavior*---that they may be *strangers* to these colonies---what an engine of oppression may this authority be in such hands?

I AM well aware, that writs of this kind may be granted at home, under the seal of the court of exchequer: But I know also, that the greatest asserters of the rights of *Englishmen* have always strenuously contended, that *such a power* was dangerous to freedom, and expressly contrary to the common law, which ever regarded a *man's house* as his castle, or a place of perfect security.



If such power was in the least degree dangerous *there*, it must be utterly destructive to liberty *here*. For the people there have two securities against the undue exercise of this power by the crown, which are wanting with us, if the late act takes place. In the first place, if any injustice is done *there*, the person injured may bring his action against the offender, and have it tried before INDEPENDENT JUDGES, who are \* NO PARTIES IN COMMITTING THE INJURY. *Here* he must have it tried before DEPENDENT JUDGES, being the men WHO GRANTED THE WRIT.

To say, that the cause is to be tried by a jury, can never reconcile men who have any idea of freedom, to *such a power*. For we know that sheriffs in almost every colony on this continent, are totally dependent on the crown; and packing of juries has been frequently practised even in the capital of the *British* empire. Even if juries are well inclined, we have too many instances of the influence of over-bearing unjust judges upon them. The brave and wise men who accomplished the revolution, thought the *independency of judges* essential to freedom.

THE other security which the people have at home, but which we shall want here, is this.

If this power is abused *there*, the parliament, the grand resource of the oppressed people, is ready to afford relief. Redress of grievances must precede grants of money. But what regard can *we* expect to have paid to our assemblies, when they will not hold even the puny privilege of *French* parliaments---that of registering, before they are put in execution, the edicts that take away our money.

The second consideration above hinted at, is this. There is a *confusion* in our laws, that is quite unknown in *Great-Britain*. As this cannot be described in a more clear or exact manner, than has been done by the ingenious author of the history of *New-York*, I beg leave to use his words. "The state of our laws opens a door to much controversy. The *uncertainty*, with respect to them, RENDERS PROPERTY PRECARIOUS, and GREATLY EXPOSES US TO THE ARBITRARY DECISION OF BAD JUDGES. The common law of *England* is generally received, together with such statutes as were enacted before we had a legislature of our own; but our courts EXERCISE A SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY, in determining *what parts of the common and statute law* ought to be extended: For it must be admitted, that the *difference of circumstances* necessarily requires us, in some cases, to REJECT the determination of both. In many instances, they have also extended even acts of parliament, passed since we had a distinct legislature, *which is greatly adding*

\* The writs for searching houses in *England*, are to be granted "under the seal of the court of exchequer," according to the statute---and that seal is kept by the chancellor of the exchequer. 4<sup>th</sup> Inst. p. 104.



*adding to our confusion.* The practice of our courts is no less *uncertain* than the law. Some of the *English* rules are adopted, others rejected. Two things therefore seem to be ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for the PUBLIC SECURITY. First, the passing an act for settling the extent of the *English* laws. Secondly, that the courts ordain a general set of rules for the regulation of the practice."

How easy it will be, under this "state of our laws," for an artful judge, to act in the most arbitrary manner, and yet cover his conduct under specious pretences; and how difficult it will be for the injured people to obtain relief, may be readily perceived. We may take a voyage of 3000 miles to complain; and after the trouble and hazard we have undergone, we may be told, that the collection of the revenue, and maintenance of the prerogative, must not be discouraged----and if the misbehavior is so gross as to admit of no justification, it may be said, that it was an error in judgment only, arising from the confusion of our laws, and the zeal of the King's servants to do their duty.

If the commissions of judges are *during the pleasure of the crown*, yet if their salaries are *during the pleasure of the people*, there will be *some check* upon their conduct. Few men will consent to draw on themselves the hatred and contempt of those among whom they live, for the empty honor of being judges. It is the sordid love of gain, that tempts men to turn their backs on virtue, and pay their homage where they ought not.

As to the third particular, "the support of civil government,"----few words will be sufficient. Every man of the least understanding must know, that the *executive* power may be exercised in a manner so disagreeable and harassing to the people, that it is absolutely requisite, that *they* should be enabled by the gentlest method which human policy has yet been ingenious enough to invent, that is, *by shutting their hands*, to "ADMONISH" (as Mr. Hume says) certain persons "OF THEIR DUTY."

WHAT shall we now think when, upon looking into the late act, we find the assemblies of these provinces thereby stripped of their authority *on these several heads*? The declared intention of the act is, "that a revenue should be raised IN HIS MAJESTY'S DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, for making a more certain and adequate provision *for defraying the charge of* THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, and *the support of* CIVIL GOVERNMENT in such provinces where it shall be found necessary, and *towards further defraying the expences of* DEFENDING, PROTECTING AND SECURING THE SAID DOMINIONS."

LET the reader pause here one moment---and reflect---whether the colony in which *he* lives, has not made such "certain and adequate provision" *for these purposes*, as is *by the colony judged suitable to its abilities, and all other circumstances*. Then let him reflect----whether if this act takes place, money is not to be raised on *that* colony



colony *without its consent*, to make “provision” *for these purposes*, which it does not judge to be *suitable to its abilities, and all other circumstances*. Lastly, let him reflect---whether the people of that country are not in a state of the most abject slavery, *whose property may be taken from them* under the notion of right, *when they have refused to give it*.

For my part, I think I have good reason for vindicating the honor of the assemblies on this continent, by publicly asserting, that THEY have made as “certain and adequate provision” *for the purposes abovementioned, as they ought to have made*, and that it should not be presumed, that they will not do it hereafter. Why then should *these most important trusts* be wrested out of their hands? Why should they not now be permitted to enjoy that authority, which they have exercised from the first settlement of these colonies? Why should they be scandalized by this innovation, when their respective provinces are now, and will be, for several years, laboring under loads of debt, imposed on them for the very purpose now spoken of? Why should all the inhabitants of these colonies be, with the utmost indignity, treated as a herd of despicable stupid wretches, so utterly void of common sense, that they will not even make “adequate provision” for the “administration of justice, and the support of civil government” among them, or for their own “defence”----though without such “provision” every people must inevitably be overwhelmed with anarchy and destruction? Is it possible to form an idea of a slavery more *complete*, more *miserable*, more *disgraceful*, than that of a people, where *justice is administered, government exercised, and a standing army maintained, AT THE EXPENCE OF THE PEOPLE, and yet WITHOUT THE LEAST DEPENDENCE UPON THEM?* If we can find no relief from this infamous situation, it will be fortunate for us, if Mr. Greenville, setting his fertile fancy again at work, can, as by one exertion of it he has stript us of our *property and liberty*, by another deprive us of so much of our *understanding*; that, unconscious of what we *have been or are*, and ungoaded by tormenting reflections, we may bow down our necks, with all the stupid serenity of servitude, to any drudgery, which our lords and masters shall please to command.

WHEN the charges of the “administration of justice,” the “support of civil government,” and the expences of “defending, protecting and securing” us, are provided for, I should be glad to know, upon *what occasions* the crown will ever call our assemblies together. Some few of them may meet of their own accord, by virtue of their charters. But what will they have to do, when they are met? To what shadows will they be reduced? The men, whose deliberations heretofore had an influence on every matter relating to the *liberty and happiness* of themselves and their constituents, and whose authority in domestic affairs at least, might well



well be compared to that of *Roman* senators, will now find their deliberations of no more consequence, than those of *constables*. They may *perhaps* be allowed to make laws for the yoking of hogs, or pounding of stray cattle. Their influence will hardly be permitted to extend so high, as the keeping roads in repair, as that business may more properly be executed by those who receive the public cash.

ONE most memorable example in history is so applicable to the point now insisted on, that it will form a just conclusion of the observations that have been made.

SPAIN was once *free*. Their *Cortes* resembled our parliaments. No money could be raised on the subject, *without their consent*. One of their Kings having received a grant from them, to maintain a war against the *Moors*, desired, that if the sum which they had given, should not be sufficient, he might be allowed, *for that emergency only*, to raise more money *without assembling the Cortes*. The request was violently opposed by the best and wisest men in the assembly. It was, however, complied with by the votes of a majority; and this single concession was a PRECEDENT for other concessions of the like kind, until at last the crown obtained a general power of raising money, in cases of necessity. From that period the *Cortes* ceased to be *useful*,---the people ceased to be *free*.

*Venienti occurrere morbo.*

Oppose a disease at its beginning.

A F A R M E R.

## L E T T E R X.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

THE consequences, mentioned in the last letter, will not be the utmost limits of our *misery* and *infamy*, if the late act is acknowledged to be binding upon us. We feel too sensibly, that *any ministerial measures* \* relating to these colonies, are soon carried successfully through the parliament. Certain pre-  
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judices

\* "The gentleman must not wonder he was not contradicted, when, as minister, he asserted the right of parliament to tax *America*. I know not how it is, but there is a MODESTY in this house, which does not chuse to contradict a minister. I wish gentlemen would get the better of this modesty. IF THEY DO NOT, PERHAPS THE COLLECTIVE BODY MAY BEGIN TO ABATE OF ITS RESPECT FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE,"  
*Mr. Pitt's Speech.*



judices operate there so strongly against us, that it may be justly questioned, whether *all* the provinces united, will ever be able effectually to call to an account before the parliament, any minister who shall abuse the power by the late act given to the crown in *America*. He may divide the spoils torn from us in what manner he pleases, *and we shall have no way of making him responsible*. If he should order, that every *governor* shall have a yearly salary of 5000 l. sterling; every *chief justice* of 3000 l.; every inferior officer in proportion; and should then reward the most profligate, ignorant, or needy dependents on himself or his friends, with places of the greatest trust, because they were of the greatest profit, this would be called an arrangement in consequence of the “adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of the civil government:” And if the taxes should prove at any time insufficient to answer all the expences of the numberless offices, which ministers may please to create, surely the members of the house of commons will be so “*modest*,” as not to “contradict a minister” who shall tell them, it is become necessary to lay a new tax upon the colonies, for the laudable purposes of defraying the charges of the “administration of justice, and support of civil government,” among them. Thus, in fact, we shall be † taxed by ministers. In short, it will be in their power to settle upon us any CIVIL, ECCLESIASTICAL, or MILITARY establishment, which they choose.

WE may perceive, by the example of *Ireland*, how eager ministers are to seize upon any settled revenue, and apply it in supporting their own power. Happy are the men, and *happy the people, who grow wise by the misfortunes of others*. Earnestly, my dear countrymen, do I beseech the author of all good gifts, that you may grow wise in this manner; and if I may be allowed to take such a liberty, I beg leave to recommend to you in general, as the best method of attaining this wisdom, diligently to study the histories of other countries. You will there find all the arts, that can possibly be practised by cunning rulers, or false patriots among yourselves, so fully delineated, that, changing names, the account would serve for your own times.

It is pretty well known on this continent, that *Ireland* has, with a regular consistency of injustice, been cruelly treated by ministers in the article of *pensions*; but there are some alarming circumstances

† “Within this act (*statute de tallagio non concedendo*) are all *new* offices erected, with *new* fees, or *old* offices, with *new* fees, for that is a tallage put upon the subject, which cannot be done without common assent by act of parliament. And this doth notably appear by a petition in parliament in anno 13 H. IV. where the commons complain, that an office was erected for measurage of cloths and canvas, with a new fee for the same, by colour of the king’s letters patents, and pray that these letters patents may be revoked, for that the king could erect no offices with new fees to be taken of the people, who may not so be charged but by parliament.” 2d Inst. p. 533.



circumstances relating to that subject, which I wish to have better known among us.

† The revenue of the crown there arises principally from the Excise granted “ *for pay of the army, and defraying other PUBLIC charges, in defence and preservation of the kingdom* ”---from the tonnage and additional poundage granted “ *for protecting the trade of the kingdom at sea, and augmenting the PUBLIC revenue* ”---from the hearth money granted---as a “ *PUBLIC revenue, for PUBLIC charges and expences.* ” There are some other branches of the revenue, concerning which there is not any *express* appropriation of them for PUBLIC service, but which were plainly *so intended*.

OF *these* branches of the revenue the crown is only *trustee* for the public. They are unalienable. They are inapplicable to any other purposes, but those for which they were established; and therefore are not *legally* chargeable with pensions.

THERE is another kind of revenue, which is a private revenue. This is not limited to any public uses; but the crown has the same property in it, that any person has in his estate. This does not amount, at the most, to *Fifteen Thousand Pounds* a year, probably not to *Seven*, and is the only revenue, that can be *legally* charged with pensions.

If ministers were accustomed to regard the rights or happiness of the people, the pensions in *Ireland* would not exceed the sum just mentioned: But long since have they exceeded that limit; and in *December 1765*, a motion was made in the house of commons

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† An enquiry into the legality of pensions on the *Irish* establishment, by *Alexander M<sup>c</sup>Aulay*, Esq; one of the King's council, &c.

Mr. *M<sup>c</sup>Aulay* concludes his piece in the following beautiful manner. “ If any *pensions* have been obtained on that establishment, to SERVE THE CORRUPT PURPOSES OF AMBITIOUS MEN.---If his Majesty's revenues of *Ireland* have been employed in pensions, TO DEBAUCH HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS of both kingdoms.---If the treasure of *Ireland* has been expended in pensions, FOR CORRUPTING MEN OF THAT KINGDOM TO BETRAY THEIR COUNTRY; and men of the neighbouring kingdom to betray both.---If *Irish* pensions have been procured, TO SUPPORT GAMESTERS AND GAMING-HOUSES; promoting a vice which threatens national ruin.---If pensions have been purloined out of the national treasure of *Ireland*, under the MASK OF SALARIES ANNEXED TO PUBLIC OFFICES, USELESS TO THE NATION; newly invented, FOR THE PURPOSES OF CORRUPTION.---If *Ireland*, just beginning to recover from the devastations of massacre and rebellion, be obstructed in the progress of her cure, BY SWARMS OF PENSIONARY VULTURES PREYING ON HER VITALS.---If, by squandering the national substance of *Ireland*, in a LICENTIOUS, UNBOUNDED PROFUSION OF PENSIONS, instead of employing it in nourishing and improving her infant agriculture, trade and manufactures, or in enlightening and reforming her poor, ignorant, deluded, miserable natives (by nature most amiable, most valuable, most worthy of public attention)----If *by such abuse of the national substance, sloth and nastiness, cold and hunger, nakedness and wretchedness, popery, depopulation and barbarism*, still maintain their ground; still deform a country abounding with all the riches of nature, yet hitherto destined to beggary.---If *such* PENSIONS be found on the *Irish* establishment; let such be cut off: And let the perfidious advisers be branded with indelible characters of public infamy; adequate, if possible, to the dishonour of their crime.”



in that kingdom, to address his Majesty on the great increase of pensions on the *Irish* establishment, amounting to the sum of 158,685l.----in the last two years.

ATTEMPTS have been made to gloss over these gross encroachments, by this specious argument----“ That expending a competent part of the PUBLIC REVENUE in pensions, from a principle of charity or generosity, adds to the dignity of the crown; and is *therefore* useful to the PUBLIC.” To give this argument any weight, it must appear, that the pensions proceed from “ *charity or generosity only*”----and that it “ adds to the dignity of the crown,” *to act directly contrary to law*.----

FROM this conduct towards *Ireland*, in open violation of law, we may easily foresee what *we* may expect, when a minister will have the *whole revenue* of *America* in his own hands, to be disposed of at his own pleasure: For *all* the monies raised by the late act are to be “ *applied* by virtue of warrants under the sign manual, countersigned by the high treasurer, or any three of the commissioners of the treasury.” The “ RESIDUE ” indeed is to be “ paid into the receipt of the exchequer, and to be disposed of by parliament.” So that a minister will have nothing to do, but to take care, that there shall be no “ residue,” and he is superior to all controul.

BESIDES the burden of *pensions* in *Ireland*, which have enormously increased within these few years, almost all the *offices* in that poor kingdom, have been, since the commencement of the present century, and now are bestowed upon *strangers*. For tho’ the merit of persons born there, justly raises them to places of high trust when they go abroad, as all *Europe* can witness, yet he is an uncommonly lucky *Irishman*, who can get a good post in his NATIVE country.

WHEN I consider the \* manner in which that island has been uniformly depressed for so many years past, with this pernicious particularity

\* In *Charles* the Second’s time, the house of commons, influenced by some factious demagogues, were resolved to prohibit the importation of *Irish* cattle into *England*. Among other arguments in favor of *Ireland* it was insisted----“ That by cutting off almost entirely the trade between the kingdoms, ALL THE NATURAL BANDS OF UNION WERE DISSOLVED, and nothing remained to keep the *Irish* in their duty, but *force* and *violence*.”

“ The king (says Mr. *Hume*, in his history of *England*) was so convinced of the justness of these reasons, that he used all his interest to oppose the bill, and he openly declared, that he could not give his assent to it with a safe conscience. But the commons were resolute in their purpose.”----“ And the spirit of TYRANNY, of which NATIONS are as susceptible as INDIVIDUALS, had animated the *English* extremely TO EXERT THEIR SUPERIORITY over their dependent state. No affair could be conducted with greater violence than this by the commons. They even went so far in the preamble of the bill, as to declare the importation of *Irish* cattle to be a NUSANCE. By this expression they gave scope to their passion, and at the same time barred the king’s prerogative, by which he might think himself intitled to dispense with a law, so FULL



particularity of *their* † parliament continuing as long as the crown pleases, I am astonished to observe such a love of liberty still animating that LOYAL and GENEROUS nation; and nothing can raise higher my idea of the INTEGRITY and ‡ PUBLIC SPIRIT of a people

OF INJUSTICE AND BAD POLICY. The lords expunged the word, but as the king was sensible that no supply would be given by the commons, unless they were gratified in all their PREJUDICES, he was obliged both to employ his interest with the peers, to make the bill pass, and to give the royal assent to it. He could not, however, forbear expressing his displeasure, at the jealousy entertained against him, and at the intention which the commons discovered, of retrenching his prerogative.

THIS LAW BROUGHT GREAT DISTRESS FOR SOME TIME UPON IRELAND, BUT IT HAS OCCASIONED THEIR APPLYING WITH GREATER INDUSTRY TO MANUFACTURES, AND HAS PROVED IN THE ISSUE BENEFICIAL TO THAT KINGDOM."

Perhaps the *same reason* occasioned the "barring the king's prerogative" in the late act suspending the legislation of *New-York*.

This we may be assured of, that we are as dear to his Majesty, as the people of *Great-Britain* are. We are his subjects as well as they, and as faithful subjects; and his Majesty has given too many, too constant proofs of his piety and virtue, for any man to think it possible, that such a prince can make any unjust distinction between such subjects. It makes no difference to his Majesty, whether supplies are raised in *Great-Britain*, or *America*; but it makes some difference to the commons of that kingdom.

To speak plainly as becomes an honest man on such important occasions, all our misfortunes are owing to a LUST OF POWER in men of abilities and influence. This prompts them to seek POPULARITY by expedients profitable to themselves, though ever so destructive to their country.

Such is the accursed nature of lawless ambition, and yet----What heart but melts at the thought!----Such false, detestable PATRIOTS, in every state, have led their blind, confiding country, shouting their applauses, into the jaws of shame and ruin. May the wisdom and goodness of the people of *Great-Britain*, save them from the usual fate of nations.

"-----MENTEM MORTALIA TANGUNT."

† The last *Irish* parliament continued 33 years, during all the late King's reign. The present parliament there has continued from the beginning of this reign, and probably will continue till this reign ends.

‡ I am informed, that within these few years, a petition was presented to the house of commons, setting forth, "that herrings were imported into *Ireland* from some foreign parts of the north so cheap, as to discourage the *British* herring fishery, and therefore praying that some remedy might be applied in that behalf by parliament."

That upon this petition, the house came to a resolution, to impose a duty of Two Shillings sterling on every barrel of foreign herrings imported into *Ireland*; but afterwards dropt the affair, FOR FEAR OF ENGAGING IN A DISPUTE WITH IRELAND ABOUT THE RIGHT OF TAXING HER.

So much higher was the opinion, which the house entertained of the spirit of *Ireland*; than of that of these colonies.

I find, in the last *English* papers, that the resolution and firmness with which the people of *Ireland* have lately asserted their freedom, have been so alarming in *Great-Britain*, that the Lord Lieutenant, in his speech on the 20th of last October, "recommended to that parliament, that such provision may be made for securing the judges in the enjoyment of their offices and appointments, DURING THEIR GOOD BEHAVIOR, as shall be thought most expedient."

What an important concession is thus obtained, by making demands becoming freemen, with a courage and perseverance becoming Freemen!



people, who have preserved the sacred fire of freedom from being extinguished, tho' the altar on which it burnt, has been overturned.

In the same manner shall we unquestionably be treated, as soon as the late taxes laid upon us, shall make posts in the "government," and the "administration of justice" *here*, worth the attention of persons of influence in *Great-Britain*. We know enough already to satisfy us of this truth. But this will not be the worst part of our case.

THE *principals*, in all great offices, will reside in *England*, making some paltry allowance to deputies for doing the business *here*. Let any man consider what an exhausting drain this must be upon us, when ministers are possessed of the power of creating what posts they please, and of affixing to such posts what salaries they please, and he must be convinced how destructive the late act will be. The injured kingdom lately mentioned, can tell us the mischiefs of *ABSENTEES*; and we may perceive already the same disposition taking place with us. The government of *New-York* has been exercised by a deputy. That of *Virginia* is now held so; and we know of a number of secretaryships, collectorships, and other offices, held in the same manner.

TRUE it is, that if the people of *Great-Britain* were not too much blinded by the passions, that have been artfully excited in their breasts, against their dutiful children the colonists, these considerations would be nearly as alarming to them as to us. The influence of the crown was thought by wise men, many years ago, too great, by reason of the multitude of pensions and places bestowed by it. These have been vastly encreased since ||, and perhaps

|| One of the reasons urged by that great and honest statesman, Sir *William Temple*, to *Charles* the Second, in his famous remonstrance, to dissuade him from aiming at arbitrary power, was, that the King "had few offices to bestow."

*Hume's Hist. of England.*

"Tho' the wings of prerogative have been clipt, the influence of the crown is greater than ever it was in any period of our history. For when we consider in how many boroughs the government has the votes at command; when we consider the vast body of persons employed in the collection of the revenue, in every part of the kingdom, the inconceivable number of placemen, and candidates for places in the customs, in the excise, in the post-office, in the dock-yards, in the ordnance, in the salt-office, in the stamps, in the navy and victualling offices, and in a variety of other departments; when we consider again the extensive influence of the money corporations, subscription jobbers and contractors, the endless dependencies created by the obligations conferred on the bulk of the gentlemens families throughout the kingdom, who have relations preferred in our navy and numerous standing army; when I say, we consider how wide, how binding a dependence on the crown is created by the above enumerated particulars, and the great, the enormous weight and influence which the crown derives from this extensive dependence upon its favor and power, any lord in waiting, any lord of the bed-chamber, any man may be appointed minister."

A doctrine to this effect is said to have been the advice of L--- H-----.

*Late News Paper.*



haps it would be no difficult matter to prove that the people have decreased.

SURELY therefore, those who wish the welfare of their country, ought seriously to reflect, what may be the consequence of such a new creation of offices, in the disposal of the crown. The *army*, the *administration of justice*, and the *civil government* here, with such salaries as the crown shall please to annex, will extend *ministerial influence* as much beyond its former bounds, as the late war did the *British dominions*.

BUT whatever the people of *Great-Britain* may think on this occasion, I hope the people of these colonies will unanimously join in this sentiment, that the late act of parliament is injurious to their liberty, and that this sentiment will unite them in a firm opposition to it, in the same manner as the dread of the *Stamp-Act* did.

SOME persons may imagine the sums to be raised by it, are but small, and therefore may be inclined to acquiesce under it. A conduct more dangerous to freedom, as before has been observed, can never be adopted. Nothing is wanted at home but a \* PRECEDENT, the force of which shall be established, by the tacit submission of the colonies. With what zeal was the statute erecting the post-office, and another relating to the recovery of debts in *America*, urged and tortured, as *precedents* in support of the *Stamp-Act*, tho' wholly inapplicable. If the parliament succeeds in this attempt, other statutes will impose other duties. Instead of taxing ourselves, as we have been accustomed to do, from the first settlement of these provinces, all our usual taxes will be converted into parliamentary taxes on our importations; and thus the parliament will levy upon us such sums of money as they chuse to take, *without any other LIMITATION, than their PLEASURE*.

WE know how much labor and care have been bestowed by these colonies, in laying taxes in such a manner, that they should be most *easy* to the people, by being laid on the proper articles; most *equal*, by being proportioned to every man's circumstances; and *cheapest*, by the method directed for collecting them.

BUT *parliamentary taxes* will be laid on us, without any consideration, whether there is any *easier* mode. The *only point* regarded will be, the *certainty of levying the taxes*, and not the *convenience* of the people on whom they are to be levied; and therefore all statutes on this head will be such as will be most likely, according to the favorite phrase, "*to execute themselves*."

#### TAXES

\* "Here may be observed, that when any ancient law or custom of parliament is broken, and the crown possessed of a *precedent*, how difficult a thing it is to restore the subject again to his FORMER FREEDOM and SAFETY."

2d Coke's Inst. p. 529.

"It is not almost credible to foresee, when any maxim or fundamental law of this realm is altered (as elsewhere hath been observed) what dangerous inconveniencies do follow."

4th Coke's Inst. p. 41.



TAXES in every free state have been, and ought to be, as *exactly proportioned as is possible to the abilities of those who are to pay them*. They cannot otherwise be *just*. Even a *Hottentot* would comprehend the *unreasonableness* of making a poor man pay as much for “defending” the property of a rich man, as the rich man pays himself.

LET any person look into the late act of parliament, and he will immediately perceive, that the immense estates of Lord *Fairfax*, Lord † *Baltimore*, and our *Proprietaries*, which are amongst his Majesty’s other “DOMINIONS” to be “defended, protected and secured” by the act, will not pay a *single farthing* for the duties thereby imposed, except Lord *Fairfax* wants some of his windows glazed; Lord *Baltimore* and our *Proprietaries* are quite secure, as they live in *England*.

I MENTION these particular cases, as striking instances how far the late act is a deviation from *that principle of justice*, which has so constantly distinguished our own laws on this continent, and ought to be regarded in all laws.

THE third consideration with our continental assemblies in laying taxes, has been the *method* of collecting them. This has been done by a few officers, with moderate allowances, under the inspection of the respective assemblies. *No more was raised from the subject*, than was used for the intended purposes. But by the late act, a minister may appoint *as many officers as he pleases* for collecting the taxes; may assign them *what salaries he thinks* “adequate;” and they are subject to *no inspection but his own*.

IN short, if the late act of parliament takes effect, these colonies must dwindle down into “COMMON CORPORATIONS,” as their enemies, in the debates concerning the repeal of the *Stamp-Act*, *firenuously insisted they were*; and it seems not improbable that some future historian may thus record our fall.

“THE eighth year of this reign was distinguished by a *very memorable event*, the *American colonies* then submitting, for the *FIRST* time, to be *taxed* by the *British* parliament. An attempt of this kind had been made about two years before, but was defeated by the vigorous exertions of the several provinces, in defence of their liberties. Their behavior on that occasion rendered their name very celebrated *for a short time* all over *Europe*; all states being extremely attentive to a dispute between *Great-Britain*, and so considerable a part of her dominions. For as she was thought to be grown too powerful, by the successful conclusion of the late war she had been engaged in, it was hoped by many, that as it had happened before to other kingdoms, civil discords would afford

† *Maryland* and *Pennsylvania* have been engaged in the warmest disputes, in order to obtain an equal and just taxation of their *Proprietors* estates: But this late act of parliament does more for those *Proprietors*, than they themselves would venture to demand. It *totally exempts* them from taxation-----tho’ their vast estates are to be “secured” by the taxes of other people.



afford opportunities of revenging all the injuries supposed to be received from her. However, the cause of dissension was removed, by a repeal of the statute that had given offence. This affair rendered the SUBMISSIVE CONDUCT of the colonies so soon after, the more extraordinary ; there being *no difference* between the mode of taxation which they opposed, and that to which they submitted, but this, that by the first, they were to be continually *reminded* that they *were taxed*, by certain marks *stamped* on every piece of paper or parchment they used. The authors of *that statute* triumphed greatly on this conduct of the colonies, and insisted, that if the people of *Great-Britain* had persisted in enforcing it, the *Americans* would have been, in a few months, *so fatigued with the efforts of patriotism*, that they would have yielded obedience.

“ CERTAIN it is, that tho’ they had before their eyes *so many illustrious examples* in their mother country, of the *constant success* attending *firmness* and *perseverance*, in opposition to dangerous encroachments on liberty, yet they quietly gave up a point of the LAST IMPORTANCE. From thence the decline of their freedom began, and its decay was extremely rapid ; for as *money* was always raised upon them by the parliament, their *assemblies* grew immediately *useless*, and in a short time *contemptible* : And in less than one hundred years, the people sunk down into that *tameness* and *supineness* of spirit, by which they still continue to be distinguished.”

*Et majores vestros & posteros cogitate.*

Remember your ancestors and your posterity.

A F A R M E R.

## L E T T E R XI.

*My dear COUNTRYMEN,*

I HAVE several times, in the course of these letters, mentioned the late act of parliament, as being the *foundation* of future measures injurious to these colonies ; and the belief of this truth I wish to prevail, because I think it necessary to our safety.

A PERPETUAL *jealousy*, respecting liberty, is absolutely requisite in all free states. The very texture of their constitution, in *mixt* governments, demands it. For the *cautions* with which power is *distributed* among the several orders, *imply*, that *each* has that share which is proper for the general welfare, and therefore that any

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further



further acquisition must be pernicious. \* *Machiavel* employs a whole chapter in his discourses, to prove that a state, to be long lived, must be frequently corrected, and reduced to its first principles. But of all states that have existed, there never was any, in which this jealousy could be more proper than in these colonies. For the government here is not only *mixt*, but *dependent*, which circumstance occasions a *peculiarity in its form*, of a very delicate nature.

Two reasons induce me to desire, that this spirit of apprehension may be always kept up among us, in its utmost vigilance. The first is this----that as the happiness of these provinces indubitably consists in their connection with *Great-Britain*, any separation between them is less likely to be occasioned by civil discords, if every disgusting measure is opposed *singly*, and *while it is new*: For in this manner of proceeding, every such measure is most likely to be rectified. On the other hand, oppressions and dissatisfactions being permitted to accumulate---if ever the governed throw off the load, *they will do more*. A people does not reform with moderation. The rights of the subject therefore cannot be *too often* considered, explained or asserted: And whoever attempts to do this, shews himself, whatever may be the rash and peevish reflections of pretended wisdom, and pretended duty, a friend to *those* who injudiciously exercise their power, as well as to *them*, over whom it is so exercised.

HAD all the points of prerogative claimed by *Charles* the First, been separately contested and settled in preceding reigns, his fate would in all probability have been very different; and the people would have been content with that liberty which is compatible with regal authority. But † he thought, it would be as dangerous for him to give up the powers which at any time had been by usurpation exercised by the crown, as those that were legally vested in it. This produced an equal excess on the part of the people. For when their passions were excited by *multiplied* grievances, they thought it would be as dangerous for them to allow the powers that were legally vested in the crown, as those which at any time had been by usurpation exercised by it. Acts, that might *by themselves* have been upon many considerations excused or extenuated, derived a contagious malignancy and odium from other acts, with which they were connected. They were not regarded according to

\* *Machiavel's Discourses*----Book 3. Chap. 1.

† The author is sensible, that this is putting the gentlest construction on *Charles's* conduct; and that is one reason why he chooses it. Allowances ought to be made for the errors of those men, who are acknowledged to have been possessed of many virtues. The education of this unhappy prince, and his confidence in men not so good or wise as himself, had probably *filled* him with mistaken notions of his own authority, and of the consequences that would attend concessions of any kind to a people, who were represented to him, as aiming at too much power.



to the simple force of each, but as parts of a system of oppression. Every one therefore, however small in itself, became alarming, as an additional evidence of tyrannical designs. It was in vain for prudent and moderate men to insist, that there was no necessity to abolish royalty. Nothing less than the utter destruction of monarchy, could satisfy those who *had* suffered, and thought they had reason to believe, they always *should* suffer under it.

THE consequences of these mutual distrusts are well known: But there is no other people mentioned in history, that I recollect, who have been so constantly watchful of their liberty, and so successful in their struggles for it, as the *English*. This consideration leads me to the second reason, why I “ desire that the spirit of apprehension may be always kept up among us in its utmost vigilance.”

THE first principles of government are to be looked for in human nature. Some of the best writers have asserted, and it seems with good reason, that “ government is founded on † *opinion*.”

CUSTOM undoubtedly has a mighty force in producing *opinion*, and reigns in nothing more arbitrarily than in public affairs. It gradually reconciles us to objects even of dread and detestation; and I cannot but think these lines of Mr. *Pope* as applicable to vice in *politics*, as to vice in *ethics*.----

“ Vice is a monster of so horrid mien,  
 “ As to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
 “ Yet *seen too oft*, familiar with her face,  
 “ We first *endure*, then *pity*, then *embrace*.”

When an act injurious to freedom has been *once* done, and the people *bear* it, the *repetition* of it is most likely to meet with *submission*. For as the *mischiefs* of the one was found to be tolerable, they will hope that of the second will prove so too; and they will not regard the *infamy* of the last, because they are stained with that of the first.

INDEED nations, in general, are not apt to *think* until they *feel*; and therefore nations in general have lost their liberty: For as violations of the rights of the *governed*, are commonly not only

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*specious*,

† “ OPINION is of two kinds, *viz.* *opinion* of INTEREST, and *opinion* of RIGHT. By *opinion* of *interest*, I chiefly understand, *the sense of the public advantage which is reaped from government*; together with the persuasion, that the particular government which is established, is *equally advantageous* with any other, *that could be easily settled*.”

“ *Right* is of two kinds, *right to power*, and *right to property*. What prevalence *opinion* of the first kind has over mankind, may easily be understood, by observing the attachment which all nations have to their ancient government, and even to those names which have had the sanction of antiquity. *Antiquity always begets the opinion of right*.”-----“ It is sufficiently understood, that the *opinion of right to property*, is of the greatest moment in all matters of government.”

*Hume's Essays.*



\* *Specious*, but *small* at the beginning, they spread over the multitude in such a manner, as to touch individuals but slightly. † Thus they are disregarded. The power or profit that arises from these violations, *centering in few persons*, is to them considerable. For this reason the *governors* having in view their particular purposes, successively preserve an uniformity of conduct for attaining them. They regularly encrease the first injuries, till at length the inattentive people are compelled to perceive the heaviness of their burthens.----They begin to complain and enquire----but too late. They find their oppressors so strengthened by success, and themselves so entangled in examples of express authority on the part of their rulers, and of tacit recognition on their own part, that they are quite confounded: For millions entertain no other idea of the *legality* of power, than that it is founded on the *exercise* of power. They voluntarily fasten their chains, by adopting a pusillanimous *opinion*, “that there will be too much *danger* in attempting a remedy,”-----or another *opinion* no less fatal,-----“that the government has a *right* to treat them as it does.” They then seek a wretched relief for their minds, by persuading themselves, that to yield their *obedience*, is to discharge their *duty*. The deplorable *poverty of spirit*, that prostrates all the dignity bestowed by divine providence on our nature---of course succeeds.

FROM these reflections I conclude, that every free state should incessantly watch, and instantly take alarm on any addition being made to the power exercised over them. Innumerable instances might be produced to shew, from what slight beginnings the most extensive consequences have flowed: But I shall select two only from the history of *England*.

HENRY the Seventh was the *first* monarch of that kingdom, who established a STANDING BODY OF ARMED MEN. This was a band of *fifty* archers, called yeomen of the guard: And this institution, notwithstanding the smallness of the number, was, to prevent discontent, || “disguised under pretence of majesty and grandeur.” In 1684 the standing forces were so much augmented, that

\* Omnia mala exempla ex bonis initiis orta sunt.

SALLUST. *Bell. Cat. S. 50.*

† “The republic is always attacked with greater vigor, than it is defended: For the *audacious* and *profligate*, prompted by their natural enmity to it, are easily impelled to act by the *least nod* of their leaders: Whereas the honest, I know not why, are generally *slow* and *unwilling* to stir; and *neglecting* always the *BEGINNINGS* of things, are never roused to exert themselves, but by the *last necessity*: So that through IRRESOLUTION and DELAY, when they would be glad to compound at last for their QUIET, at the expence even of their HONOR, they commonly lose them BOTH.”

CICERO'S *Orat. for SEXTIUS.*

Such were the sentiments of this great and excellent man, whose vast abilities, and the calamities of his country during his time, enabled him, by mournful experience, to form a just judgment on the conduct of the friends and enemies of liberty,

|| *Rapin's History of England.*



that *Rapin* says---“ The king, in order to make his people *fully sensible of their new slavery*, affected to muster his troops, which amounted to 4000 well armed and disciplined men.” I think our army, at this time, consists of more than *seventy* regiments.

THE method of taxing by EXCISE was first introduced amidst the convulsions of the civil wars. Extreme necessity was pretended for it, and its short continuance promised. After the restoration, an excise upon *beer, ale and other liquors*, was granted to the † king, one half in fee, the other for life, as an equivalent for the *court of wards*. Upon *James the Second's* accession, the parliament § gave him the first *excise*, with an additional duty on *wine, tobacco*, and some *other* things. Since the revolution it has been extended to salt, candles, leather, hides, hops, soap, paper, paste-boards, mill-boards, scale-boards, vellum, parchment, starch, silks, calicoes, linens, stuffs, printed, stained, &c. wire, wrought plate, coffee, tea, chocolate, &c.

THUS a *standing army* and *excise* have, from their first slender origins, tho' always *bated*, always *feared*, always *opposed*, at length swelled up to their vast present bulk.

THESE facts are sufficient to support what I have said. 'Tis true, that all the mischiefs apprehended by our ancestors from a *standing army* and *excise*, have not yet *happened*: But it does not follow from thence, that they *will not happen*. The inside of a house may catch fire, and the most valuable apartments be ruined, before the flames burst out. The question in these cases is not, what evil *has actually attended* particular measures---but, what evil, in the nature of things, *is likely to attend* them. Certain circumstances may for some time delay effects, that *were reasonably expected*, and that *must ensue*. There was a long period, after the *Romans* had prorogued his command to \* *Q. Publilius Philo*, before *that example* destroyed their liberty. All our kings, from the revolution to the present reign, have been *foreigners*. Their *ministers* generally continued but a short time in authority †; and they themselves were *mild* and *virtuous* princes.

A BOLD

† 12 *Char.* II. Chap. 23 and 24.

§ 1 *James* II. Chap. 1 and 4.

\* In the year of the city 428, “ Duo singularia hæc ei viro primum contingere; prorogatio imperii non ante in ullo facta, et acto honore triumphus.” *Liv. B. 8. Chap. 23. 26.*

“ Had the rest of the *Roman* citizens imitated the example of *L. Quintius*, who refused to have his consulship continued to him, they had never admitted that custom of proroguing of magistrates, and then the prolongation of their commands in the army had never been introduced, *which very thing was at length the ruin of that commonwealth.*” *Machiavel's Discourses*, B. 3. Chap. 24.

† I dont know but it may be said, with a good deal of reason, that a quick rotation of ministers is very desirable in *Great-Britain*. A minister there has a vast store of materials to work with. *Long Administrations* are rather favorable to the *reputation* of a people abroad, than to their *liberty*.



A BOLD, *ambitious* prince, possessed of *great abilities*, firmly *fixed* in his throne *by descent*, served by *ministers like himself*, and rendered either *venerable* or *terrible* by the *glory of his successes*, may execute what his predecessors did not dare to attempt. Henry the Fourth tottered in his seat during his whole reign. Henry the Fifth drew the strength of that kingdom into *France*, to carry on his wars there, and left the *commons* at home, *protesting*, “ that the people were not bound to serve out of the realm.”

It is true, that a strong spirit of liberty subsists at present in *Great-Britain*, but what reliance is to be placed in the *temper* of a people, when the prince is possessed of an unconstitutional power, our own history can sufficiently inform us. When Charles the Second had strengthened himself by the return of the garrison of *Tangier*, “ *England* (says *Rapin*) saw on a sudden an *amazing revolution*; saw herself *stripped of all her rights and privileges*, excepting such as the king should vouchsafe to grant her: And what is *more astonishing*, the *English* themselves *delivered up* these very rights and privileges to Charles the Second, which they had so *passionately*, and, if I may say it, *furiously* defended against the designs of Charles the First.” This happened only *thirty-six* years after this last prince had been beheaded.

SOME persons are of opinion, that liberty is not violated, but by such *open* acts of force; but they seem to be greatly mistaken. I could mention a period within these forty years, when almost as great a change of disposition was produced by the *SECRET* measures of a *long* administration, as by Charles’s violence. Liberty, perhaps, is never exposed to so much danger, as when the people believe there is the least; for it may be subverted, and yet they not think so.

PUBLIC disgusting acts are seldom practised by the ambitious, at the beginning of their designs. Such conduct *silences* and *discourages* the weak, and the wicked, who would otherwise have been their *advocates* or *accomplices*. It is of great consequence, to allow those who, upon any account, are inclined to favor them, something specious to *say* in their defence. Their power may be fully established, tho’ it would not be safe for them to do *whatever they please*. For there are things, which, at some times, even *slaves* will not bear. *Julius Cæsar*, and *Oliver Cromwell*, did not dare to assume the title of *king*. The *Grand Seigneur* dares not lay a *new tax*. The king of *France* dares not be a *protestant*. Certain popular points may be left untouched, and yet freedom be extinguished. The commonalty of *Venice* imagine themselves free, because they are permitted to do what they ought not. But I quit a subject, that would lead me too far from my purpose.

By the late act of parliament, taxes are to be levied upon us, for “ defraying the charge of the *administration of justice*----the support of *civil government*----and the expences of *defending* his Majesty’s dominions in *America*.”



IF any man doubts what ought to be the conduct of these colonies on this occasion, I would ask him these questions.

HAS not the parliament *expressly* AVOWED their INTENTION of raising money from us FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES? Is not this scheme popular in Great-Britain? Will the taxes, imposed by the late act, answer those purposes? If it will, must it not take an immense sum from us? If it will not, is it to be expected, that the parliament will not fully execute their INTENTION when it is *pleasing at home*, and *not opposed here*? Must not this be done by imposing NEW taxes? Will not every addition, thus made to our taxes, be an addition to the power of the British legislature, by increasing the number of officers employed in the collection? Will not every additional tax therefore render it more difficult to abrogate any of them? When a branch of revenue is once established, does it not appear to many people *invidious* and *undutiful*, to attempt to abolish it? If taxes, sufficient to accomplish the INTENTION of the parliament, are imposed by the parliament, what taxes will remain to be imposed by our assemblies? If no material taxes remain to be imposed by them, what must become of them, and the people they represent?

\* “ IF any person considers these things, and yet thinks our liberties are in no danger, I wonder at that person’s security.”

ONE other argument is to be added, which, by itself, I hope, will be sufficient to convince the most incredulous man on this continent, that the late act of parliament is *only* designed to be a PRECEDENT, whereon the future vassalage of these colonies may be established.

EVERY duty thereby laid on articles of British manufacture, is laid on some commodity, upon the exportation of which from Great-Britain, a drawback is payable. Those drawbacks, in most of the articles, are *exactly double* to the duties given by the late act. The parliament therefore might, in *half a dozen lines*, have raised MUCH MORE MONEY, only by stopping the drawbacks in the hands of the officers at home, on exportation to these colonies, than by this solemn imposition of taxes upon us, to be collected here. Probably, the artful contrivers of this act formed it in this manner, in order to reserve to themselves, in case of any objections being made to it, this specious pretence----“ that the drawbacks are gifts to the colonies, and that the late act only lessens those gifts.” But the truth is, that the drawbacks are intended for the encouragement and promotion of British manufactures and commerce, and are allowed on exportation to *any foreign parts*, as well as on exportation to these provinces. Besides, care has been taken to slide into the act, some articles on which there are no drawbacks. However, the whole duties laid by the late act on all the articles therein specified are *so small*, that they will not amount to *as much* as the drawbacks which are allowed on *part* of them only. If therefore,

\* Demosthenes’s 2d Philippic.



therefore, *the sum to be obtained by the late act*, had been the *sole object* in forming it, there would not have been any occasion for “ the COMMONS of Great-Britain, to GIVE and GRANT to his Majesty RATES and DUTIES for raising a revenue IN his Majesty’s dominions in America, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charges of the administration of justice, the support of civil government, and the expence of defending the said dominions ;”---nor would there have been any occasion for an † expensive board of commissioners, and all the other new charges to which we are made liable.

UPON the whole, for my part, I regard the late act as an *experiment made of our disposition*. It is a bird sent out over the waters, to discover, whether the waves, that lately agitated this part of the world with such violence, are yet *subsided*. If *this adventurer* gets footing here, we shall quickly find it to be of the † kind described by the poet.-----

“ *Infelix vates.*”

A direful foreteller of future calamities.

#### A F A R M E R.

† The expence of this board, I am informed, is between Four and Five Thousand Pounds Sterling a year. The establishment of officers, for collecting the revenue in *America*, amounted before to Seven Thousand Six Hundred Pounds *per annum*; and yet, says the author of “ The regulation of the colonies,” “ the whole remittance from *all* the taxes in the colonies, at an average of *thirty* years, has not amounted to One Thousand Nine Hundred Pounds a year, and in that sum Seven or Eight Hundred Pounds *per annum* only, have been remitted from *North-America*.”

The smallness of the revenue arising from the duties in *America*, demonstrates that they were intended only as REGULATIONS OF TRADE: And can any person be so blind to truth, so dull of apprehension in a matter of unspeakable importance to his country, as to imagine, that the board of commissioners lately established at such a charge, is instituted to assist in collecting One Thousand Nine Hundred Pounds a year, or the trifling duties imposed by the late act? Surely every man on this continent must perceive, that they are established for the care of a NEW SYSTEM OF REVENUE, which is but now begun.

† “ *Dira cælæno,*” &c. *Virgil, Æneid 3.*



## L E T T E R XII.

My dear COUNTRYMEN,

SOME states have lost their liberty by *particular accidents*: But this calamity is generally owing to the *decay of virtue*. A people is travelling fast to destruction, when *individuals* consider *their* interests as distinct from *those of the public*. Such notions are fatal to their country, and to themselves. Yet how many are there, so *weak* and *sordid* as to *think* they perform *all the offices of life*, if they earnestly endeavor to encrease their own *wealth, power, and credit*, without the least regard for the society, under the protection of which they live; who, if they can make an *immediate profit to themselves*, by lending their assistance to those, whose projects plainly tend to the injury of their country, rejoice in their *dexterity*, and believe themselves entitled to the character of *able politicians*. Miserable men! Of whom it is hard to say, whether they ought to be most the objects of *pity* or *contempt*: But whose opinions are certainly as *detestable*, as their practices are *destructive*.

Tho' I always reflect, with a high pleasure, on the integrity and understanding of my countrymen, which, joined with a pure and humble devotion to the great and gracious author of every blessing they enjoy, will, I hope, ensure to them, and their posterity, all temporal and eternal happiness; yet when I consider, that in every age and country there have been bad men, my heart, at this threatening period, is so full of apprehension, as not to permit me to believe, but that there may be some on this continent, *against whom you ought to be upon your guard*----Men, who either \*  
I hold,

\* It is not intended by these words, to throw any reflection upon gentlemen, because they are possessed of offices: For many of them are certainly men of virtue, and lovers of their country. But supposed obligations of *gratitude*, and *honor*, may induce them to be silent. Whether these obligations *ought to be* regarded or not, is not so much to be considered by others, in the judgment they form of these gentlemen, as whether *they think* they ought to be regarded. Perhaps, therefore, we shall act in the properest manner towards them, if we neither *reproach* nor *imitate* them. The persons meant in this letter, are the *base spirited wretches*, who may endeavor to *distinguish themselves*, by their sordid zeal in defending and promoting measures, which *they know, beyond all question*, to be *destructive* to the *just rights and true interests* of their country. It is scarcely possible to speak of *these men* with any degree of *patience*----It is scarcely possible to speak of them with any degree of *propriety*----For no words can truly describe their *guilt and meanness*----But every honest bosom, on their being mentioned, will *feel* what cannot be *expressed*.

If their wickedness did not blind them, they might perceive along the coast of these colonies, many men, remarkable instances of wrecked ambition, who after *distinguishing themselves* in the support of the *Stamp-Act*, by a courageous contempt of their country, and of justice, have been left to linger out their  
miserable



hold, or expect to hold certain advantages, by setting examples of fervility to their countrymen.----Men, who trained to the employment, or self taught by a natural versatility of genius, serve as decoys for drawing the innocent and unwary into snares. It is not to be doubted but that such men will diligently bestir themselves on this and every like occasion, to spread the infection of their meanness as far as they can. On the plans *they* have adopted, this is *their* course. *This* is the method to recommend themselves to their *patrons*.

FROM *them* we shall learn, how *pleasant* and *profitable* a thing it is, to be for our SUBMISSIVE behavior *well spoken of* at *St. James's*, or *St. Stephen's*; at *Guildhall*, or the *Royal Exchange*. Specious fallacies will be dressed up with all the arts of delusion, to persuade one colony to *distinguish herself from another*, by unbecoming condescensions, *which will serve the ambitious purposes of great men* at home, and therefore will be thought by them to entitle their assistants in obtaining them to considerable rewards.

OUR fears will be excited. Our hopes will be awakened. It will be insinuated to us, with a plausible affectation of *wisdom* and *concern*, how *prudent* it is to please the *powerful*-----how *dangerous* to provoke them----and then comes in the perpetual incantation that freezes up every generous purpose of the soul in cold, inactive expectation---“that if there is any request to be made, compliance will obtain a favorable attention.”

OUR *vigilance* and our *union* are *success* and *safety*. Our *negligence* and our *division* are *distress* and *death*. They are *worse*----They are *shame* and *slavery*. Let us equally shun the benumbing  
stillness

miserable existence, without a government, collectorship, secretaryship, or any other commission, to console them *as well as it could*, for loss of virtue and reputation----while numberless offices have been bestowed in these colonies on people from *Great-Britain*, and new ones are continually invented, to be thus bestowed. As a *few great prizes* are put into a lottery to TEMPT multitudes to lose, so here and there an *American* has been raised to a good post.----

“*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*”

Mr. *Greenville*, indeed, in order to recommend the *Stamp-Act*, had the unequalled generosity, to pour down a golden shower of offices upon *Americans*; and yet these *ungrateful* colonies did not thank Mr. *Greenville* for shewing his kindness to their countrymen, nor *them* for accepting it. How must that great statesman have been surprized, to find, that the unpolished colonies could not be reconciled to *infamy* by *treachery*? Such a *bountiful* disposition towards us never appeared in any minister before him, and probably never will appear again: For it is *evident*, that *such a system* of policy is to be established on this continent, as, in a short time, is to render it utterly unnecessary to use the least art in order to conciliate our approbation of any measures. Some of our countrymen may be employed to *fix* chains upon us, but *they* will never be permitted to *hold* them afterwards. So that the utmost, that any of them can expect, is only a *temporary provision*, that *may* expire in their own time; but which they may be *assured*, will preclude their children from having any consideration paid to *them*. NATIVES of *America* must sink into total NEGLECT and CONTEMPT, the moment that THEIR COUNTRY loses the constitutional powers she now possesses.



stillness of *overweening sloth*, and the feverish activity of that *ill-informed zeal*, which busies itself in maintaining *little, mean and narrow* opinions. Let us, with a truly wise *generosity and charity*, banish and discourage all *illiberal distinctions*, which may arise from differences in *situation*, forms of *government*, or modes of *religion*. Let us consider ourselves as MEN---FREEMEN---CHRISTIAN FREEMEN---separated from the rest of the world, and firmly bound together by the same rights, interests and dangers. Let these keep our attention inflexibly fixed on the GREAT OBJECTS, which we must CONTINUALLY REGARD, in order to preserve those rights, to promote those interests, and to avert those dangers.

LET these truths be indelibly impressed on our minds---that we cannot be HAPPY, without being FREE---that we cannot be free, without being secure in our property---that we cannot be secure in our property, if, without our consent, others may, as by right, take it away---that taxes imposed on us by parliament, do thus take it away---that duties laid for the sole purpose of raising money, are taxes---that attempts to lay such duties should be instantly and firmly opposed---that this opposition can never be effectual, unless it is the united effort of these provinces---that therefore BENEVOLENCE of temper towards each other, and UNANIMITY of counsels, are essential to the welfare of the whole---and lastly, that for this reason, every man amongst us, who in any manner would encourage either *dissension, diffidence, or indifference*, between these colonies, is an enemy to himself, and to his country.

THE belief of these truths, I verily think, my countrymen, is indispensably necessary to your happiness. I beseech you, therefore, † “teach them diligently unto your children, and talk of them when you sit in your houses, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

WHAT have these colonies to ask, while they continue free? Or what have they to dread, but insidious attempts to subvert their freedom? Their prosperity does not depend on ministerial favors doled out to particular provinces. They form one political body, of which each colony is a member. Their happiness is founded on their constitution; and is to be promoted, by preserving that constitution in unabated vigor, throughout every part. A spot, a speck of decay, however small the limb on which it appears, and however remote it may seem from the vitals, should be alarming. We have all the rights requisite for our prosperity. The legal authority of Great-Britain may indeed lay hard restrictions upon us; but, like the spear of Telephus, it will cure as well as wound. Her unkindness will instruct and compel us, after some time, to discover, in our industry and frugality, surprising remedies---if our rights continue unviolated: For as long as the products of our labor, and

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the

† Deuteron. vi. 7.



the *rewards* of our *care*, can properly be called *our own*, so long it will be worth our while to be *industrious* and *frugal*. But if when we plow---sow---reap---gather---and thresh---we find, that we plow---sow---reap---gather---and thresh *for others*, whose PLEASURE is to be the SOLE LIMITATION *how much* they shall take, and *how much* they shall leave, WHY should we repeat the unprofitable toil? *Horses* and *oxen* are content with *that portion* of the *fruits* of their work, which their owners assign them, in order to keep them strong enough to raise successive crops; but even *these beasts* will not submit to draw for their *masters*, until they are *subdued* by *whips* and *goads*.

LET us take care of our *rights*, and we *therein* take care of our *prosperity*. \* “SLAVERY IS EVER PRECEDED BY SLEEP.” *Individuals* may be dependent on ministers, if they please. STATES SHOULD SCORN IT;---and if you are not wanting to *yourselves*, you will have a proper regard paid you by *those*, to whom if you are not *respectable*, you will be contemptible. But-----if we have already forgot the reasons that urged us, with unexampled unanimity, to exert ourselves two years ago---if our zeal for the public good is worn out before the *homespun cloaths*, which it caused us to have made---if our resolutions are so faint, as by our present conduct to condemn our own late successful example---if we are not affected by any reverence for the memory of our ancestors, who transmitted to us that freedom in which they had been blest----if we are not animated by any regard for posterity, to whom, by the most sacred obligations, we are bound to deliver down the invaluable inheritance----THEN, indeed, any minister----or any tool of a minister----or any creature of a tool of a minister----or any lower † instrument of ‡ administration, if lower there be, is a personage whom it may be dangerous to offend.

I SHALL

\* *Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws*, Book 14, Chap. 13.

† “*Instrumenta regni.*” *Tacitus's Ann. Book 12*, § 66.

‡ If any person shall imagine that he discovers, in these letters, the least dislike of the dependence of these colonies on *Great-Britain*, I beg that such person will not form any judgment on *particular expressions*, but will consider the *tenor* of all the letters taken together. In that case, I flatter myself, that every unprejudiced reader will be convinced, that the true interests of *Great-Britain* are as dear to me, as they ought to be to every good subject.

If I am an *Enthusiast* in any thing, it is in my zeal for the perpetual dependence of these colonies on their mother country.---A dependence founded on *mutual benefits*, the continuance of which can be secured only by *mutual affections*. Therefore it is, that with extreme apprehension I view the smallest seeds of discontent, which are unwarily scattered abroad. *Fifty* or *Sixty* years will make astonishing alterations in these colonies; and this consideration should render it the business of *Great-Britain* more and more to cultivate our good dispositions towards her: But the misfortune is, that those *great men*, who are wrestling for power at home, think themselves very slightly interested in the prosperity of their country *Fifty* or *Sixty* years hence, but are deeply concerned in blowing up a popular clamor for supposed *immediate advantages*.



I SHALL be extremely sorry, if any man mistakes my meaning in any thing I have said. Officers employed by the crown, are, while according to the laws they conduct themselves, entitled to legal obedience, and sincere respect. These it is a duty to render them ; and these no good or prudent person will withhold. But when these officers, thro' rashness or design, desire to enlarge their authority beyond its due limits, and expect improper concessions to be made to them, from regard for the employments they bear, their attempts should be considered as equal injuries to the crown and people, and should be courageously and constantly opposed. To suffer our ideas to be confounded by *names* on such occasions, would certainly be an *inexcusable weakness*, and probably an *irremediable error*.

WE have reason to believe, that several of his Majesty's present ministers are good men, and friends to our country ; and it seems not unlikely, that by a particular concurrence of events, we have been treated a little more severely than they wished we should be. *They* might not think it prudent to stem a torrent. But what is the difference to *us*, whether arbitrary acts take their rise from ministers, or are permitted by them ? Ought any point to be allowed to \* a good minister, that should be denied to a bad one ? The mortality of ministers, is a very frail mortality. A ----- may succeed a *Shelburne*----A ----- may succeed a *Conway*.

WE

For my part, I regard *Great-Britain* as a Bulwark, happily fixed between these colonies and the powerful nations of *Europe*. That kingdom remaining safe, we, under its protection, enjoying peace, may diffuse the blessings of religion, science, and liberty, thro' remote wildernesses. It is therefore incontestably our *duty*, and our *interest*, to support the strength of *Great-Britain*. When confiding in that strength, she begins to forget from whence it arose, it will be an easy thing to shew the source. She may readily be reminded of the loud alarm spread among her merchants and tradesmen, by the universal association of these colonies, at the time of the *Stamp-Act*, not to import any of her MANUFACTURES.

In the year 1718, the *Russians* and *Swedes* entered into an agreement, not to suffer *Great-Britain* to export any NAVAL STORES from their dominions but in *Russian* or *Swedish* ships, and at their own prices. *Great-Britain* was distressed. *Pitch* and *tar* rose to *Three Pounds* a barrel. At length she thought of getting these articles from the colonies ; and the attempt succeeding, they fell down to *Fifteen Shillings*. In the year 1756, *Great-Britain* was threatened with an invasion. An easterly wind blowing for six weeks, she could not MAN her fleet, and the whole nation was thrown into the utmost consternation. The wind changed. The *American* ships arrived. The fleet sailed in ten or fifteen days. There are some other reflections on this subject, worthy of the most deliberate attention of the *British* parliament ; but they are of such a nature, that I do not chuse to mention them publicly. I thought it my duty, in the year 1765, while the *Stamp-Act* was in suspense, to write my sentiments to a gentleman of great influence at home, who afterwards distinguished himself, by espousing our cause, in the debates concerning the repeal of that act.

\* Ubi imperium ad ignaros aut minus bonos pervenit ; novum illud exemplum, ab dignis & idoneis, ad indignos & non idoneos transfertur.

Sall. Bell. Cat. § 50.



WE find a new kind of minister lately spoken of at home-----  
 “THE MINISTER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.” The term seems to have peculiar propriety when referred to these colonies, *with a different meaning annexed to it*, from that in which it is taken there. By the word “minister” we may understand not only a *servant of the crown*, but a *man of influence* among the commons, who regard themselves as having a share in the *sovereignty* over us. The “minister of the house” may, in a point respecting the colonies, be so strong, that the minister of the crown *in the house*, if he is a distinct person, may not choose, even where his sentiments are favorable to us, to come to a pitched battle upon our account. For tho’ I have the highest opinion, of the deference of the house for the King’s minister, yet he may be so good natured, as not to put it to the test, except it be for the mere and immediate profit of his master or himself.

BUT whatever kind of *minister* he is, that attempts to innovate a *single iota* in the privileges of these colonies, him I hope you will *undauntedly oppose*; and that you will never suffer yourselves to be either *cheated* or *frightened* into any *unworthy obsequiousness*. On such emergencies you may surely, without presumption, believe, that ALMIGHTY GOD himself will look down upon your righteous contest with gracious approbation. You will be a “*band of brothers*,” cemented by the dearest ties,----and strengthened with inconceivable supplies of force and constancy, by that sympathetic ardor, which animates good men, confederated in a good cause. Your *honor* and *welfare* will be, as they now are, most intimately concerned; and besides----*you are assigned by divine providence*, in the appointed order of things, the *protectors of unborn ages*, whose *fate* depends upon your *virtue*. Whether *they* shall arise the *generous* and *indisputable heirs* of the noblest patrimonies, or the *dastardly* and *hereditary drudges* of imperious task-masters, YOU MUST DETERMINE.

To discharge this double duty to *yourselves*, and to your *posterity*, you have nothing to do, but to call forth into use the *good sense* and *spirit* of which you are possessed. You have nothing to do, but to conduct your affairs *peaceably*----*prudently*----*firmly*----*jointly*. By *these means* you will support the character of *freemen*, without losing that of *faithful subjects*----a good character in any government----one of the best under a *British* government----You will prove, that *Americans* have that true *magnanimity* of soul, that can resent injuries, without falling into rage; and that tho’ your devotion to *Great-Britain* is the most affectionate, yet you can make PROPER DISTINCTIONS, and know what you owe to *yourselves*, as well as to *her*----You will, at the same time that you advance your *interests*, advance your *reputation*----You will convince the world of the *justice* of your *demands*, and the *purity* of your *intentions*.---While all mankind must, with unceasing applauses, confess,



fefs, that YOU indeed DESERVE liberty, who so *well understand* it, so *passionately love* it, so *temperately enjoy* it, and so *wisely, bravely,* and *virtuously assert, maintain, and defend* it.

“ *Certe ego libertatem, quæ mihi a parente meo tradita est, experiar : Verum id frustra an ob rem faciam, in vestra manu situm est, quirites.*”

FOR my part, I am resolved to contend for the liberty delivered down to me by my ancestors ; but whether I shall do it effectually or not, depends on you, my countrymen.

“ How little soever one is able to write, yet when the liberties of one’s country are threatened, it is still more difficult to be silent.”

A F A R M E R.

Is there not the strongest probability, that if the universal sense of these colonies is immediately expressed by RESOLVES of the assemblies, in support of their rights, by INSTRUCTIONS to their agents on the subject, and by PETITIONS to the crown and parliament for redress, these measures will have the same success now, that they had in the time of the *Stamp-Act*.

D.

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*The E N D.*

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